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ACCENT
A QUARTERLY OF NEW LITERATURE
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VALERY LARBAUD:

Portrait of Eliane

Translated by Robert Greer Cohn

Here is a very beautiful park. At the center, steep, jagged, a high heap of greennesses. Only two trees form it: a great black cedar, and a tree of Lower California, source of much marveling, the only one of its species ever successfully acclimated in France: a trunk the color of bitumen and, all around it, the convulsion and windings of a thousand branches with thick foliage of a tender green, branches bending themselves back down into the soil of the lawn, dragging on the grass and, higher up, swerving in S-shapes like whiplashes immobilized in mid-crack. These two giant creatures, mingling their fronds, scatter shadow and freshness about the grounds.

It's not a very big park; but it is as beautiful as the gardens of Asia Minor in the midst of desolate regions. The lawn, with its screens of bamboos, encloses a deep pool always troubled by a fountain's sheaf. Around the lawn bends a single pathway, shadowy with palms, cedars, African lotus. An iron-grill fence cloaked in ivy, half-hid by laurel hedges, shelters the pathway against whirlwinds of dust rising from

the white streets and delimits the park. In the midst of the bamboos, the bust of a *langue d'oc* poet on its marble column.

Leaving the burning streets, you go in there, you sit on a bench, sheltered from the south wind; the blue of the sky seems kinder glimpsed through the cedar's black foliage; you listen to the fountain-water. For this is a public park; no proprietary shadow saddens the lawn; but the delicate souls of vagabonds come to quench themselves there in fresh air and shadow. The station is nearby. You hurry away from the cindery, smoke-blackened platforms and penetrate into the leafy calm. You make sure you are alone. Vagabonds understand so well the art of seclusion.

But vagabonds aren't the only ones who frequent the park. Here you may meet little *rentiers* of the city, various old women and majestic Catalan nursemaids with their babies. Then there are the petty bourgeois of surrounding country places and sub-prefectures who have come to the city on business. Their errands done, idle, emptied of all thought, they await here, hours on end, the train which will take them back to their homes. And among these last-mentioned, today in the beautiful park, is Eliane, a dreamy child, with her mother, and her little brother who is just beginning to walk.

Eliane has been fourteen years old since the month of February and we are now nearing the end of April. She is a child. But she is already so tall for her age, so round and strong, that soon we shall no longer see scattered on her shoulders and swinging against her back that great mass of silky golden tresses we admire — and it seems most probable that by autumn her mother will have her wearing long dresses. She will blossom out in the southern summer. Meanwhile, her young vigor, her country health, are visible to all: her rounded solid legs distend her black wool stockings; she is no longer able to button the sleeves of her blouse around her plump wrists. Clearly, the dress she is wearing today, masterpiece of a small-town seamstress, this *dressy* brownish dress with a white stripe, is the last short dress she will ever wear.

Eliane, taciturn and completely dazed by her dreams, is seated with an indifferent, submissive air on a chair opposite her mother, who is knitting. Her mother is a thin and dark little woman with quick eyes. A practical woman, whose mind is scarcely occupied with anything else than meals, darnings, clothes-scrubbings, economies. She thinks she knows her daughter, whom she dominates materially with all her mother-of-a-family authority; but in reality she is, like many

parents, completely indifferent to the girl's inner life and perhaps she doesn't even suspect there is such a thing as an inner life. She has never ceased to be in love with her husband, a big blond man with a Teutonic head, of a savage appearance and a quite mild nature. He is the only person in the world whose ideas and feelings count for her. The little boy there, an amorphous mass enveloped in white and topped with a wicker-work sunhat, a baby who can hardly walk, is the latest pledge of that faithful love: he has his mother's black eyes. Eliane takes after her father: she has the white and pink complexion of Northern girls, and blue eyes; that is why her mother exclaims from time to time, sighing: "What a pity that a girl should be born with those eyes!" This remark and many more like it together with the caprices of maternal tyranny have cost her this girl's affection. Eliane fears her mother and obeys her unwillingly.

Her mother absorbs her, nullifies her, holds her in a state of subjection which is constantly more painful as she becomes a grown girl.

When will all this end?

Fortunately, the gate of dreams is open day and night for young Eliane. One naturally has to find refuge from outside things, and life cannot be too hard, don't you agree, for a big child with fairy tresses, whose eyes are the most beautiful and roundest in the world. Up to a year ago she was herself a fairy; she would go into their palaces, as happens in the lovely story-books. Above all there was Prince Charming . . . Oh! Eliane had loved Prince Charming with a true love.

It was like in the picture of the "Swing": he was sitting on the dangling board, holding the two ropes in his hands; and she got on beside him; the board tilted and bobbed a moment, and then, gently, leaning back, folding and then thrusting forth his legs (whose every contour was molded by blue silken hose) he set the swing in motion. She admired his strength; she was so aware of his presence that she was overcome with an illusion of vertigo and had to hold herself back, in her bed, to keep from crying out in fright. Little by little the movement accelerated, Prince Charming carried her far above the tree-tops, soared with her through the air. Leaves, brushed before and behind them, trembled; the ropes creaked; together they bounded full into the sky. Soon the swing would fly all the way up and over and they would fall, hurled into the depths.

Then Eliane, in terror, clasped Prince Charming's torso, she abandoned herself to his strength, she rested her head on his shoulder and closed her eyes.

And there wasn't only the swing: there was also the gondola on the Lido, with the Venetian signor (he was still Prince Charming) stretched out at the feet of a beautiful, haughty dogaressa. Eliane stepped into the gondola; she felt no anger against the beautiful dogaressa; she knelt before Prince Charming and murmured, "I am your humble slave." She had read that somewhere.

Again, there was the Naked Man of the *Petit Larousse Illustré.* Here is the way it was: when she was certain of not being observed she took this dictionary from her father's desk and, deeply moved by the forbidden pleasure (for her conscience told her this was wrong), she gave herself over to the greediness of her eyes. Under the entry of "Man" there is an anatomical drawing spread over two pages. Here you see the skeleton, the nervous system, the muscles stripped of their fleshy covering; but a naked man, an athlete, girded with a tight fleecy animal skin, is shown here from before and behind in pugilistic attitudes which cause his belly and his pectoral, shoulder and thigh muscles to bulge out.

Eliane never tired of looking at this picture, at times brushing the paper with her lips.

She easily ignored the lines and words indicating and naming the diverse parts of this handsome body: middle occiput, abdomen, epigastrium. She had made of him a living being, a personage like Prince Charming; she invented adventures, novels, of which he was the hero. But her imagination soon withdrew here; to look at him was much more pleasant. And she would have passed whole hours in contemplation of the "naked man" except that children are never left alone for very long.

Besides, since about a year ago, Eliane has ceased to be Prince Charming's girl-friend and she has exhausted all she can learn from the *Petit Larousse Illustré.* Now, with infinite precautions, and without seeming to, trembling lest her mother take note of her strategem, Eliane looks at men.

It's an education. At first she had found them all ugly and, especially, insignificant, busy with coarse interests, enemies of dreams, useless as shadows, as dead people. Obviously, Prince Charming and the magnificent Greek wrestler corresponded to nothing in reality. But little by little the look accustoms itself; taste frees itself from the schools; one no longer needs to be shown beauty to know it; the artist is franchised from his masters and the young girl in love learns to create — out of passers-by on the street, half-naked grape-gatherers, a

workman standing on his scaffolding — select lovers, beautiful beings, powerful, refined, heroic natures, souls of poets and of conquerors. The abstract adoration of virile shapes no longer satisfies Eliane; this was a purely spiritual cult in which the heart had too small a part.

What was even the handsome wrestler without a soul, without a life of feelings and thoughts? That inner life on which one may act, in which one may participate? But Eliane began by looking preferably at workmen, the handsome negligent fellows who toil in the sun. It was still admiration for naked flesh, bulging muscles, flat chests, narrow hips, hard arms. Besides, the big bourgeois are really hideous. They push before them bay-windows dilated by years of excesses in eating; their hair falls out, their cheeks sag, their noses are bibulous and the expression in their eyes is extinguished. But at twenty years they are certainly not like that. Eliane wasn't slow to notice this. And, then, we have to content ourselves with what real life offers us, free to enlarge on it as we choose. She came to discover a sort of more-delicate attractiveness in several students encountered in the streets of the provincial capital during one of the brief visits she made with her mother.

And now everywhere there are men of about thirty, *messieurs,* with handsome beards, with gaze assured and yet very gentle.

Eliane is delighted to see them, to tread upon the ground they walk on. But she, poor dreamer, doesn't work up any interest in what people do, in the little everyday affairs. Mediocre destinies leave her cold. For her future lovers there must be adventuresome existences, resounding actions, popularity, glory. And all that must surely exist somewhere, but not here, not in her present surroundings. Besides, is she not a kind of prisoner? "Oh, when I am twenty!" She thinks this is the age of freedom.

There are, she is sure of it, delicious beings in the world; their whole life is a poem; they win battles, they organize great popular movements; they pass abruptly from extremest poverty to the most fabulous riches; they are handsome, they are famous, and they disdain the pettinesses of life. Eliane has been brought up in the Reform Religion; she will make first communion next year, but the clearest part of her religious instruction is the Song of Songs, read and reread in the family Bible. And since her father, who is a free-thinker, has too often railed, in her presence, at what he calls the extravagances of the saints, male and female, she feels nothing but disgust for weakness and poverty and has a horror of sick people. These are the reasons

why the Delicious Beings are all strong and triumphant. She communicates with them in the world of thought; she is their little wife.

But each of these noble souls needs a particular body. So, Eliane chooses from among the passers-by in her vicinity, anywhere, the man who will incarnate her dream of the moment. She takes his features into her memory, carefully preserves the remembrance of his stances, and closes her eyes to see him better once again. And it is like with Prince Charming; only, reality finally provides sustenance for that fantasy which henceforth need no longer exert itself in a vacuum.

Eliane thinks of somebody who really exists. Eliane has a Beloved, several Beloveds, and a multitude of lovers. A Beloved who is still a bit imprecise, an Ideal; but also other Beloveds chosen from among the young folk of her little town; their features are familiar to her; some of them even know her parents, in real life, and at times speak a few banal words to her. But, whilst she pretends to study her lessons and do her home-work, she lives at their side, she accompanies them through a thousand adventures, military expeditions, voyages of exploration. One time it is this boy and another time that one who is her imaginary companion. And it is especially at night, in her bed, before falling asleep, that she thinks of them. Each in his turn, each on his night, according to Eliane's whim.

Sometimes she will remain faithful to one of the Beloveds during all the nights of a whole week.

He is lying next to her; they embrace; she caresses him with her burning hands; he returns her caresses. She falls asleep in his arms . . . And there is the multitude of all those she has brought home for a single night, the memory charming and quickly effaced: officers, Bohemian basket-sellers, men of the world, a young sailor.

Eliane believes in the transmission of thoughts. She doesn't want to think that all that love, all those desires, are lost without anything going forth to touch the souls of those to whom they are so passionately addressed. Don't they dream of her on those nights? Don't the ones she chooses at least feel some indeterminable pleasure? If only she could be sure of it she would ask no more. And yet if one of the Beloveds, one day, deigned to notice her, came to her, whoever he was, even the least desirable of all, but a true lover she could enfold in her arms — oh! how quickly she would give up all those sterile dreams which exhaust her . . .

At the end of the last long vacation the farmhouse was full of grape-gatherers. She had taken note of one of them: his pants rolled

up above his knees, his shirt sleeves turned up to his shoulders, his shirt wide-open on a golden, admirable torso; and a fine young-man's head with big black eyes expressive of tender looks. Eliane had asked him for a cluster of grapes; never before had she dared go so far.

And all that night, in the tufted darkness of her chamber, panting, sweating, she had hoped he would come, the handsome grape-gatherer.

She told herself that by dint of wishing that, by calling to him with her mind, concentrating all the power of her will, he would hear her. There was an instant when the door-latch seemed to creak. She sat up in bed, without breathing: she had so firmly believed she could make him come.

Finally she gave up hoping and, suddenly, she sobbed with rage. Upon waking the next morning she felt the tears dried on her cheeks, which were a little pale. She kissed her reflection, long, in the mirror. She felt a good deal of pity for herself.

Yes, if she met the Beloved! . . . But men don't lack boldness: in order to pass a moment with the object of their love they scale balconies, they force doors and risk their lives. Alas! Eliane is still only a little girl, with her tresses on her back and short skirts; and men don't direct their attention to *comme il faut* little girls who are, besides, always accompanied by their mamas or their maids. Don't they then understand the language you are speaking to them, beautiful round eyes of Eliane?

Yes, if she met the Beloved . . . And perhaps it would be she who would flee him, who wouldn't want to abandon her dreams . . .

"Eliane," her mother calls, with a heavy local accent. Eliane starts: "Mama?"

"You're up in the clouds again? Why do you sit there like a silly goose staring in front of you? Go take your little brother for a walk along the lawn, in the shadow; slowly, be sure and go slowly . . ."

Eliane obeys; she gets up, takes her little brother's hand and steers him toward the see-saw under the African lotus trees. How far away from her mother was her thought, from her brother, and the lovely park! . . . If she would only meet the Beloved! . . .

But in truth this would only be the beginning of happiness, the definitive long holidays. *She* wouldn't love *him;* or, rather, whilst loving him she would keep her independence, would give herself only partly. *He,* naturally, would love *her* unreservedly. She hopes for his coming and the revelation he will bring her as one hopes to read a book or take a trip to a distant land. But this would be so much more important than any book or a trip!

And then this: to learn by experience just what place one can occupy in the existence of these unknown beings; to try to dominate them; to become their aim and their reason for living.

The "mistress," to be someone's mistress . . . In her Minervois district the big wine merchants often keep two households. These things are discussed in front of her almost daily. She understands very well that people pity the wives for being forced to endure this sharing and they heap scorn on the mistresses: "Those creatures don't die, they croak," says her mother. But it is certain that the world besmirches with its scorn and pursues with its hatred everything which is noble and pure, everything which is above its heavy common sense, its natural lowness. Eliane has understood all this; and she trembles with fury and pride when her mother tells her: "Just be like everybody else," or when she cries in front of lady visitors: "You wouldn't believe how worried I am about that girl; she just won't get interested in other people; she'll never be like everybody else." "Oh no!" thinks Eliane, "I'll never be like everybody else, that's for sure." And she secretly pities and admires the mistresses; she would like to know them; she senses in them sisters who would understand her. Those miserable intrigues of jovial and brutal merchants interest her as much as the great passions of the heroes of George Sand, of whom she has read, in hiding, a few incomplete volumes found at the bottom of a drawer in her room.

Eliane lifts up her little brother and kisses him sweetly. Then she softly sings. She asks herself, "Can I please somebody after all?" And she still dreams of the beautiful songs where they speak of blondes, of those songs she dares not sing in front of her mother and which she never hears without blushing a little as if the words were addressed to her: "My beautiful blonde angel" and "Blonde queen, far from the world." Oh, those were songs to touch the soul!

Eliane breathes deeply; with a single big step she mounts upon the see-saw platform; and immediately she regrets having let herself do this childish thing, for two young gentlemen have just entered the park.

With slow steps they saunter along the pathway bending about the lawn. At a glance Eliane judges them: they belong to the throng of those to whom she remains indifferent and whose memory she never cherishes; in brief, two young *messieurs*.

She thinks of a student she passed not long ago in *rue de la Loge*. His beret with a red stripe covered negligently his abundant black

hair and revealed a wide pure forehead. In her lucid memory she sees all his features, his nonchalant stride. But did he even see her? Why doesn't she ever dare look people in the face? What would it matter if they read her thoughts; so much the better, even: it would be almost a beginning of an intrigue, a secret between her and a few strangers. If she only dared, if she dared . . . speak to someone. And this would also be a way of no longer being her mother's stupid drudge; she wouldn't cease being obedient and resigned; but in those huge heavings of revolt which fill her, numb her, she would dream of . . . of, well, *him!* and that thought would calm her and avenge her.

The two young men have just passed near Eliane. She has looked them both in the face, unintentionally, to try herself out. But her glance has met that of the young man who is on the left, closer to the lawn, small in stature, brown. She has let herself be taken by surprise; and he has leaned his glance on hers, for a long instant, while continuing to talk.

Eliane still thinks of her mother, not with anger but despair; she endures her as one would endure prison, a long sickness. "That woman" makes her wear her old shoes under the pretext that they both have the same size foot; Eliane tells herself she would rather go barefoot. Again they pass; it's their second go around. And again the eyes of the brown young man encounter Eliane's look. And then, as she boldens, for several seconds they look at each other. He admires her fresh cheeks and her beautiful round eyes; and her glances, astonished, happy, now ashamed and now bold, veil and reveal, refuse and yield. One would say that they flutter, those glances.

The other young man sees nothing of this affair. He is giving long explanations to his friend: "You see, Lucien . . ." Eliane thinks: "He is named Lucien. Your name is a perfume, wafting." And she goes toward Lucien, under the pretext of prolonging a little the child's promenade. But her mother, interrupting her knitting, lifts her nose and at the very moment Lucien passes by close to Eliane, she shouts: "Eliane, don't go so far away, will you!" Eliane retraces her steps. "He has heard, he knows my name now." And without knowing precisely why, she is happy at this.

And Lucien, with his friend, continues walking around the lawn, and each time he passes by Eliane a new exchange of glances binds them closer. What can he be thinking of her? He seems to see without disapproval the village dress, what is visible of the border, quite simple, of the honest calico underskirt, and the wide-ribbed hose and

the maternal shoes with worn-down heels. Oh! Lucien, you are not handsome but in that instant you are the most loved; for you are the first to have looked at her in that way.

Now she has come back to stay near her mother. They are standing a few feet from each other; and the baby goes from his mother to his sister with little clumsy steps, his eyes filled with vertigo. Eliane bends down to him under her long hanging locks of hair. She cries: "Oh! he's so funny, the sweet little thing . . ." Lucien passes, he is near her. Then, hurriedly, she adds — as if she continued to speak to the child, but for Lucien alone — the word of the books, the incommensurable word, "I love you." With what a strangled voice, choked with fear, made deep and dulled by the emotion of such an avowal, her first avowal! The order of nature isn't changed: a ray of sunlight makes a beautiful rainbow in the wet spray of the fountain. How limpid the air! Nothing marks this great event in Eliane's life. But she still hears the sound of her voice, the sound of the terrible words she has just pronounced, like the reverberation of a thunderclap . . .

At last she refinds her calm. Her mother has been taken in by her ruse; maybe she didn't even hear. But Lucien has understood; he is passing by again and his eyes tell her so, gravely. Joy fills her. At last! Someone knows the wondrous secret.

And she grows bolder. The two friends will soon be near her again. She walks in front of them, despite the objurgation of her mother who calls to her not to overtire the baby and to come back and sit beside her. She hears nothing. She steers herself between the lawn and Lucien and, since there is not enough room, he brushes her involuntarily. She had calculated it. Lucien bows, murmurs, "Pardon, Mademoiselle." Eliane decides to obey her mother.

And when she is installed on the chair with her brother on her knees, she lifts her head and sees Lucien and his friend leaving the park. She thinks: "Now there is a secret between Lucien and me; I love and am loved." Once again too much must not be asked of life.

The train they are waiting for, the train back, will soon be announced in the station. Eliane, calmed, sighs in sadness, "Farewell, Lucien." A street corner has just hidden him.

Does he carry away with him anything more than the souvenir of a childish avowal and the reflection in him of a hundred beautiful looks, blue and fluttering?

JOHN M. BRADBURY:

Robert Penn Warren's Novels:
The Symbolic and Textural Patterns

In their recent anthology, *The House of Fiction,* Allen Tate and Caroline Gordon through a series of analyses have defined a fictional technique which can only be called "symbolic naturalism." "If the art of naturalism consists mainly in making *active* those elements which had hitherto in fiction remained *inert,* that is, description and expository summary, the further push given the method by Joyce consists in manipulating what at first sight seems to be mere physical detail into dramatic symbolism." For the editors it is evident that this is not merely a, but *the* technique of great fiction. This verdict may well be questioned, but there can be no doubt that symbolic naturalism has dominated at least one important sector of modern fiction, that of our Southern literary renaissance.

In such a writer as Faulkner the symbolic or mythic aspect may predominate, with characters, events, and style subject to portentous heightening; or the naturalism, highly selective and "active," may predominate, as in Eudora Welty. Tate's own novel, *The Fathers,* approaches the norm of the definition, not without self-consciousness. But in Robert Penn Warren's fiction the balance is achieved with no sacrifice of individuality and human warmth.

Warren's novels, pegged to the "naturalism" of historic events, localities and characters, and patterned to the archetypal quest motif, are created, from the structural skeleton up, to the Tate-Gordon specifications. On the textural surface a sharply observed and colloquially recorded realism consorts with rich rhetoric and a profuse imagery, which is restrained and directed by the patterns of its symbolic extensions.

On the whole, the textural organization of the novels, as distinguished from the structural and ideological organizations, appears strongly influenced by that of Elizabethan drama, particularly as interpreted by modern "expanded metaphor" analysis.[1] Each of

[1] Slim Sarrett's brief critique of Shakespeare in *At Heaven's Gate* offers a kind of "figure in the carpet" for Warren's novels, both thematically and texturally.

the novels is dominated by sets of images which undergo variations and expansions in conjunction with thematic developments. At the same time, a more specialized imagery often attaches to individual characters, whose particularity is thereby given symbolic extension. Finally an independent localized imagery wells up in a spontaneous flow, as if to give body to Ransom's theory of textural irresponsibility — the "id" element of poetry.

The conceptual method is that of the poetic drama conceived both as "metaphysical" poem and as "romantic" tragedy. As a technique for the novel, such a method has many advantages. It permits, even requires, a plot of action, hence a melodramatic appeal on the primary level. Like Shakespeare and many of his contemporaries, Warren derives his plots largely from historic events of a violent nature. Again on the level of the pit (though the appeal is by no means so limited) he is enabled to indulge an earthy humor and salty wit. At the same time, he can introduce bold rhetoric in soliloquies and scenes of high emotional stress. Yoking together such opposites, he preserves unity through the control and extension of the major symbolism. In prose form, therefore, Warren's dramatic symbolic naturalism embodies all the chief Fugitive poetic theories: Ransom's doctrine of "metaphysical" poetry, Tate's "tension" between intensive and extensive factors, and his own concept of "impure" poetry.[2] Each of the novels, premised on the dualism of fact and idea, probes human experience in both of its aspects (physical and Platonic, intensive and extensive, naturalistic and symbolic) in order to "earn" its insights or tensions.

Warren's first published novel, *Night Rider,* establishes its basic imagetic patterns in the opening scenes. The crowd and the crowd pressure to which Percy Munn is subjected on the opening page as he prepares to leave his train fix one symbolic pole — the political one — for the novel's action.

> The gathering force which surged up the long aisle behind him like a wave took and plunged him hard against the back of the next man.

After the crowd on the streets and the subsequent group pressure which forces his commitment to the mass movement of the Association, and his too successful speech, Munn recalls "how incredibly brilliant and empty had been the sky from which the light poured over the landscape and the innumerable faces." The emptiness which

[2] Robert Penn Warren: "Pure and Impure Poetry," *Kenyon Review* (Spring, 1943).

is attached here as a corollary of the crowd symbol (of the light as well) gradually takes form, or at least outline, in the figure of Senator Tolliver, who is seen almost at once staring at a "blankly sunlit wall." Tolliver is a moral hollowness surrounded by political man, and it is finally with Tolliver that Munn is forced to identify himself. Equivocal, like all of Warren's symbols, the crowd represents the true reality which Munn seeks and at the same time the image of his own emptiness.

More obvious, as well as more complex, is the pervasive symbolism of light and dark, and its extension in terms of warmth and coldness. In the main, the day-night pattern reflects Warren's fact-idea dualism, and it is closely allied, as in the quotation above, with the political symbols. The first "glare of the morning sun . . ., half-blinding him after the dim interior of the coach," marks Munn's emergence from the cocoon of his marriage into a world of fact and activity. But the full glare of responsible public action for Percy Munn hardly survives his maiden speech. From the moment of his complete involvement in the Association, he becomes a creature of the night. The first evening in the hotel he cannot sleep and rises to watch and listen to the crowd — with "disgust not only for them but for himself." The revulsion he feels for the men and for his own act of identification with them is balanced by a new wave of exultation, an orator's gesture in the night — he would "tell them what he knew to be the truth." The accompaniment of this commitment to "the Word" is the singing in the streets below to the tune of "John Brown's Body," a significant reference since Warren's early biography of Brown pictures him as an archetype of man given over to abstraction. Munn's gesture becomes his renunciation of his own essential humanity and of his proper self-realization.

After the inauguration of night-riding tactics, every important event in Munn's life occurs under the aegis of night, with the coldness of stealth, lust and violence gradually mastering every phase of his activity. Only occasional flickers of light and warmth penetrate to Munn through the body of the novel until the climax of night-riding brings the great burst of flame from dynamited warehouses. But the moment of fulfillment which this artificially enkindled light and heat provide for Munn is soon itself a cold blackened ruin. On a grander scale, it is the empty oratorical gesture in the hotel room.

In addition, the false heat and light of the fires parallel the love affair of Munn and Lucille Christian. Their desperately sought ful-

fillment is a clandestine, violent and empty action, like that of the night riders, and it ends in the destruction of a true center of warmth, Lucille's father, simultaneously with the destruction by fire of Munn's home. The double catastrophe by night and fire discovers to the lovers their essential coldness, isolation and emptiness.

The imagetic pattern is completed with "the blunt, frayed flame" of Munn's pistol punctuating the night, the pistol with which he had been symbolically unable to kill his hollow father-surrogate and alter ego, Tolliver. For the trapped and dying Munn, the final scene is a reversion to childhood innocence, with the voices of his assassins sounding to him "like the voices of boys at a game in the dark." Thus the symbolism which began with the dimness of Munn's emergence from innocence comes full circle, back through night-abstraction with its false lights to the dark womb of innocence and death.

Warren's second novel, *At Heaven's Gate*, is ideologically a study of modern "freedom"; hence the ironic title, applying primarily to Sue Murdock — "my lady sweet, arise" — but to the other major characters as well in their attempts to escape the ties of "evil" family and tradition. This is Warren's only city novel, and its central imagery reflects the agrarian's judgment against a form of life dominated by finance capitalism and cut off from its roots in the soil. The novel develops two large symbolic clusters: those relating to decay, disease, deformation and the like; and those which may be grouped as unreality images. The focus of the first group is the figure of Lemuel Murdock, whose murder of a rival politician in defense of his honor, as he and his code understood honor, has left him "mountainously decayed, sagging from the big maned head, the gray streaked yellowly as by old rust stains, the whole mass sagging, as by long slip and erosion." Symbolically, he is the tradition itself, the South, a monstrous ruin in the new order. Similarly, the backgrounds of the younger characters abound in images of decay and deformation. In Jerry Calhoun's agrarian home there are cripples, foulness, rot; in Dorothy Murdock's peeling family house rotting Revolutionary War boots; in Duckfoot Blake's slum bungalow a "distorted parody of an old man"; in Sweetwater's decaying family home "dust-smelling horsehair furniture" and "gray-faced old ladies" whose breaths smell "like stale cooked turnips."

These insistences from the past are more than balanced by images of filth, crippling and disease in the city life of the younger generation. While the repulsive heritage represented by Lemuel Murdock

may be taken as sufficient excuse for the unprincipled, artfully smooth and attractive surface life which his son creates, the moral emptiness and human coldness of that life is sufficient to drive the daughter, Sue, to a restless career which reflects distortedly, invertedly the images projected directly by the figures of decayed tradition. Sue's city world is dominated by the overt images of the cripple, Rosemary, of Sarrett's ambiguous sex, of Sweetwater's scars, Blake's splay feet and farts. But it is the inverted reflection of these pictures that gives them symbolic weight. Sue must compel Jerry to take her on the cripple's bed, and he must feel "as though he clasped that other body, small, bony, twisted." She must wear Rosemary's dress and sleep on her bed in her patch of warmth, and call Jerry an "emotional cripple." The characters "pick" their psychological "scabs," "boil out" their mental "pus," exhibit their ambitions "like boils"; they need to squeeze their emotional "pimples," they slobber and vomit or feel like it, spit or "dribble saliva." Art in Sarrett's circle becomes a growth out of "dung and offal," poetry "the glitter of pus," criticism "at its worst . . . an attempt to disintegrate the rose into the dung which fertilized the root," and discovery of a sympathetic role in the theatre "like first menstruation."

Art, particularly theatre art, along with sport, comprises a major division of the unreality images, which symbolize a contrasting but intimately related aspect of traditionless lives. The specific unreality images revolve largely about two centers: Bogan Murdock, who is a "solar myth" or "just a dream Bogan Murdock had" ("When Bogan Murdock looks in the mirror, he doesn't see a thing"); and Slim Sarrett, persuasive exponent of the reality principle, but himself a whole-cloth creation. Bogan personifies the chimera of finance capitalism, a "wonderful idea" without tangible reality. It is Bogan's moral non-existence (reflected also in the sport-for-appearance images surrounding him) which gradually steals from his wife her sense of reality and which, by its specious glitter, attracts Jerry Calhoun, only to leave him with the memory of "events and persons . . . as shadowy as frosted breath on the air." And it is this blank heritage which Sue, as the modern questing spirit, attempts to fill with a series of liaisons: first, with the American dream hero, up from poverty through football to success (Jerry); then with irresponsible aestheticism (Sarrett); finally with Communism (Sweetwater).

Sarrett personifies the artistic-intellectualist denial of the world of fact. His attributes, the strict athlete's discipline, the hard surface and penetrating insight, the androgynous character, the alienation

from and by society, and the retaliatory attack upon society, are those of art itself. Sue, attached to Sarrett's as well as to Murdock's unreality center, experiences her most significant moments in non-self identifications: on the stage, particularly as the innocent victim, Cordelia; in the utterly detached artificiality of her participation in Sarrett's parties; in the self-forgetfulness of drink and sex; and in her times of pure emptiness, when her overpowering urge to be loved and to be identified through love has left her. The numerous images of gold and glitter link her with her father's world, those of freedom, power and powerlessness with her attempt to find a self in the world of abstractions bounded by Jerry, Sarrett and Sweetwater. To the end her cry, that of the "freed" generation, is " 'Oh, what am I?' "

All the King's Men is a novel of redemption and the only one of Warren's four which permits the protagonist, who is again like Sue Murdock a symbol of modern man in quest of self-identification, to emerge from his ordeal to the hope of a new life. The symbolic fable of this book embodies the world of reality in Willie Stark and the world of idea or abstraction in Adam Stanton, while the Eves of the piece, Anne Stanton and Sadie Burke, are the agents by which knowledge (of fact or evil) is transmitted.

The pervasive imagery of this novel enforces the redemption-rebirth theme, as Norton Girault has noted, and the related Eden-fall-knowledge motif to which the title obliquely refers. The early episodes dealing with the childhood idyll of Adam, Jack Burden and Anne are heavily saturated with water imagery. The womb-innocence connotations are underscored by the numerous child-like features and attitudes which Jack notes in Anne. But the major image of Anne, that of lying back gazing into the bright sky or with closed eyes, whether she is floating on water or reclining on the seat of the roadster or waiting naked on Jack's bed, is one of expectancy and receptivity to real experience. Jack's preservation of this image, which he understands only in its aspect of innocence, and his inability to violate it are the indices of his subconscious urge to hold to or return to the womb state. So Jack is thinking in terms of an "aqueous green" forest coolness with himself as a bird diving into it, while Anne is destroying his memory picture by accepting Stark (fact) as a lover, embracing the realities which Jack shuns. When he discovers the violation, for which the receptive aspect of the image should have prepared him, the water symbol becomes "green scum on the shrunk pool around

which the exposed earth cracks and scales like a gray scab." (Jack is still unprepared in a final sequence when Anne opens her door for him with, " 'Of course I'd let you in.' ")

The rebirth symbols appear on several levels and in various tones throughout the novel. The episode of Willie Stark's enlightenment, when he changes from a "country sap" into an astute politician, is dominated by images of conversion, ritual killing and revival. Stark had heard the call to politics "as for a saint," had been "the little white lamb of God." In the crucial scene, he becomes "the sacrificial goat . . . the ram in the bushes," passes out to be called "the remains" with a "face pale and pure." Jack's morning midwifery produces "a high and pure and transparent look like a martyr's face," and Jack can soon comment that "he's been on the road to Damascus and he saw a great light." The scene ends with Willie's eyes shining "and over him God's bright, brassy, incandescent sky." All this forms an ironic prelude to the final enlightenment and rebirth of Jack himself. Willie is reborn into "realism," and it is under the aegis of Willie and realism in its various forms that Jack is to live. On one level, this novel is a testing of philosophic realism — as *World Enough and Time* is a testing of romantic idealism.

As early as page 11, Jack's resistance to the rebirth which comes from knowledge has been presented in a graphic image:

> But the clammy, sad little foetus which is you way down in the dark which is you too lifts up its sad little face and its eyes are blind. . . . It wants to lie in the dark and not know and be warm in its not-knowing.

(The contrasting image for Willie in his pre-Damascus phase is: "inside himself . . . something was swelling and growing painfully and dully and imperceptibly like a great potato in a dark, damp cellar.") Jack's progress toward enlightenment is a reverse movement, marked by running away images and by the womb returns called "Great Sleeps." The climax of this process occurs in Jack's mechanistic phase — the Sleeps separate his adoptions of various "realistic" philosophies. He watches Adam perform a pre-frontal lobotomy, designed to provide the patient with a new personality by purely mechanical means, an operation, Jack thinks, "more radical even than what happened to Saul on the road to Damascus." Like Willie's, this ironic conversion-rebirth previews Jack's, but now more explicitly, for the imagetic paraphernalia includes the "white nightshirts" of a revivalist baptism and Jack's insistence that the patient "is born again and not

of woman. I baptize thee in the name of the Great Twitch, the Little Twitch, and the Holy Ghost. Who, no doubt, is a Twitch too."

One further false rebirth symbol is associated with Jack's "father," the Scholarly Attorney. Here the religious aura, the "hanged man" symbol (George, the more or less adopted son of the Scholarly Attorney, was "the man who got hanged" in the circus), the bed wetting, the "maternal little noises," the metaphor of a "saint" to describe George's masticatory bliss — all support a downward-to-false-innocence redemptive regeneration. And since George has become the stand-in for Jack in a doubly false or unreal situation, the ironic application of the scene is clear.

With this preparation, the true redemption of Jack Burden occurs, but only after he has recognized his responsibility for the deaths of both his father-imago and his real father. The ritual shedding of the father's blood has purchased knowledge, for all knowledge that "is worth anything . . . has cost some blood, and knowledge is redemption," and "the truth always kills the father."

Jack's rebirth is heralded by his mother's scream, "which snatched [him] from sleep" with its "bright, beautiful, silver purity of feeling," by her moaning and drugged behavior. Her revelation of a capacity to love gives Jack not only a new father and a new mother, but "a new picture of the world." At the same time, Willie Stark's "greatness," which "perhaps he spilled . . . on the ground," as Onan his seed, has a dubious reincarnation in the illegitimate perhaps-grandchild whom Lucy adopts and names "Willie Stark." The contrast and irony are complete with the paralleling of this offspring of spilled seed with Jack's hard birth into responsibility.

World Enough and Time, a novel in which Warren tests various versions of philosophic idealism, offers a symbolic pattern oriented about primitivistic ritual, centered in the sacrificial shedding of blood, and the ritual's idealization in romantic tragedy. The key image for the former aspect is developed from the Indian conception of Kentucky, defined by Warren as the "Dark and Bloody Ground . . . a holy land . . . a land of mystery . . . for the gods lived here." The principal dramatic images reflect Jeremiah Beaumont's view of himself "mounting the high stage" to perform a "noble" tragic action.

Blood imagery dominates the early wilderness scenes in which Jeremiah's character is formed, the climactic episodes involving the sacrificial killing of Col. Fort, Jeremiah's father surrogate, and the final retributive section. The development of this blood motif cul-

minates in the symbolic hacking off of Jerry's head — the final Platonic severance which Ransom has brilliantly exploited in his poem, "Painted Head." The blood pattern is initiated with a description of the acres of wild strawberries on the father's home site, so thick that "his boots were red and bright with juice as with blood." Jeremiah adds: "But I remember from my own time how they were sweet to the tongue." This association of sweetness with the blood image is indicative of Jeremiah's — and romanticism's — distortion of natural violence, and it sets the referents for the following religious conversion scene. The revivalist's sermon, visualizing God as a great bear whose "fangs drip wrath" and the victim-to-be-saved as a lamb offering its throat so that its blood will spurt under the divine jaws, is prefaced by words touching "for their sweetness," and followed by the exhortation: "let there be sweetness in your terror." At this point there recurs to Jeremiah an ambiguous sacrificial and sadistic image from early childhood of a young woman martyr at the stake in flames. Thus the symbolic complex of sweetness, blood-sacrifice and "high stage" is completed.

As Jeremiah approaches his sacrificial murder of Fort, the revivalist imagery controls his thinking. "The blood of Fort would clear him. . . . He would bathe in it and be clean." He goes off on his "errand of blood" like a knight of romance, with a red ribbon "the color of blood" to fly "as a pennon for victory." When the deed is done, the thought of his own blood to be shed in retribution starts a sudden feeding of "great lightness and cleansing, as though he . . . *was* innocent and could trust his innocence."

The final sequence begins with Jeremiah's flight to the West (a constant false innocence motif in Warren). Here the God-bear image recurs, but now ironically twisted, as Jeremiah seeks an animal-innocence in the body alone. His guide, "smeared and stained" with juice of the wild grape, seems "savagely painted for ritual, or as though [he] had fed on dripping flesh and the waste blood had caked about the muzzle." In the retreat of the Gran Boz, where Rachel wears a red ribbon on her hair to greet the monster, the religious ritual is perverted to drunken fornication at the side of a man bleeding to death — and Jeremiah contracts a venereal disease from the "corrupt blood" of the woman. After the severance of head from body and the burial of "ideal" head alone, a final note of irony is appended when Willkie Barron, who personifies the way of the world, shoots himself so "tidily through the heart" that he leaves not "a single spatter of blood on the floor."

The dramatic symbolism, representing Jeremiah's idealistic version of his own action and later Rachel's forced version of hers, plays a constant accompaniment to the blood-sacrifice motif. For Jeremiah in his first retreat with Rachel, the world of affairs is a "mock-show," but soon it is a "flight from another more dire mock-show" of his own intimate life of mind. From this perception, Jeremiah rises to picture and then to enact his "secret drama," in which Fort is the villain and he the hero. But it must all be played in the dark, out of the light of realism, and he must draw Rachel onto the romantic shadow stage with him. The high tragedy has its ironic climax when poison fails to produce more than a violent retching sickness:

> So after the fine speeches and the tragic stance, the grand exit was muffed. The actors trip on their ceremonial robes, even at the threshold of greatness, and come tumbling down in a smashing pratt-fall, amid hoots and howls from the house. . . .

The world of reality has the last laugh. The primitive ritual of hunting and bloodshed — the pure earth-born violence apostrophized by Faulkner and Hemingway — is perverted through the three stages of Jeremiah's errors until it ends in pratt-falls and animal reversion and corruption. In contrast, realism, triumphantly managing its entrances and exits, bows off to applause — and in the wings accomplishes its own bloodless defeat.

The "rhetoric" of Warren's novels, particularly that of *All the King's Men,* has been harshly treated by several competent critics. "Rhetoric" is a much abused term, but it is the proper one for Warren if it be understood in its Elizabethan and Baroque-Metaphysical sense. In literary temperament Warren is much closer to 16th and 17th Century ideals than to modern simplicity cults which have attached pejorative connotations to a word once denoting the effective use of language.

Warren's normal prose style derives from the Ransomic dualism which underlies his own theory of "impure" poetry. To do justice to the "complexities and contradictions of experience," language must, he feels, reflect in a constant counterpoint both the ideal-romantic aspect of man's dual nature and the crude fact-animalism. To disallow either of these aspects of Warren's writing — critics have referred to them as "fancy writing" and "vulgarity," thereby revealing much of their own temperaments — is to rule out Warren's philosophic and literary premise. These stylistic extremes are not

what the critics imply, lapses of taste or indulgences, but technique, and technique that has been fully integrated with conception.

Each of the novels is, in fact, a different stylistic, as well as symbolic, compound. *Night Rider,* the least complex of the books, told from a single point of view, proceeds largely in graphic and forceful, but always decorous, style, slightly elevated to the tone of the idealistic Southern landholder. (The constant use of titles for the characters, especially the author's consistent reference to his protagonist as "Mr. Munn," is largely a tonal device.) Counterpoint to this normal style, which is often poetically heightened in Munn's thought monologues, is supplied chiefly by the dialogue: the colorful, earthy comments and explosions of Bill Christian, the only less vivid realism of Dr. MacDonald, and the dialects of the farmers and Negroes, in particular the finely sustained tale of Willie Proudfit.

At Heaven's Gate, with its shifting multiple viewpoints, employs a rich variety of styles, from the densely metaphoric mountain-evangelist dialect of Ashby Windham to the brittle nervous language of the Slim Sarrett episodes or the tough-gentle humor of Sweetwater's. Through such ground styles as these play such variations as Blake's gamey naturalism and Uncle Lew's rural crudities, the hysterical ritualistic dialect of Negroes in torture-sport and in fear, Murdock's pretentious self-salesmanship, and Sarrett's modernist poetry. In this Babel of speeches, reflecting the city setting with its confusion of purpose and creed, there is no center. There is, instead, a gradual intrusion of an impersonal, yet cynical, news reporter style which ends by dominating the closing sections. The abstract belief-less voice of the city prevails finally.

Both the rhetoric and the "smart-aleck" commentary of *All the King's Men* have been roundly condemned by critics, usually without reference to their functional significance. Once the role of Jack Burden, the narrator, is seen in its true centrality, with his dual nature objectified on the one side in Willie Stark's factualism, on the other in Adam's abstract idealism, the necessity for the stylistic devices becomes evident. The cynical smart-aleck pose is Jack's defense against an alien world, the "fancy writer" the smothered and hence exaggerated ideal of himself. These two continually warring elements are further overlaid by the retrospective reflections of the mature philosophic Jack of the book's end. Most characteristic of this counterpointed style is the appended tag which snatches a sharp insight, a lush description, or an indulged emotion from its heights and debases it in the manner of Eliot's "The Waste Land." Or again

the brilliantly mixed descriptions of scenes and people, such as the one which opens the book, recklessly paced kaleidoscopic successions of imagery and metaphor, quick observation and comment, humor and vulgarity and beauty. This is Jack (and perhaps Warren) letting himself go, but it is also, functionally, the hectic symbol of the Willie-Adam "terrible division of our age."

Extended philosophic passages, in this book always metaphorical and often racy, and the paced speculative formality of the Cass Mastern story reveal new stylistic veins that come to dominate *World Enough and Time.* This fourth novel, despite its quadruple perspective — the historian's, that of the documents, those of Jeremiah present and reflective — offers an evener tonal surface than any of the earlier books. Jeremiah's formal vocabulary is modified in the historian's controlled language, but there is no real contrast. Similarly, the speculative bent, marked in both styles, has only been purged of its emotional ingredient in the historical commentary, without loss of essential resemblance.

As in *Night Rider,* the "world of fact" contrast is supplied largely in the dialogue. The ready spittle-punctuated realism of the common speech and its dialectal color comes through unpurged in Jeremiah's report, where it stands as the groundling commentary on the "high stage" performance of Jeremiah and his peers. There is nothing in this story of the racy cynicism of Jack Burden, none of the babel of competing voices which characterizes *At Heaven's Gate.* It is an index of Warren's stylistic versatility and mastery that he is able in this novel to capture the somewhat stilted tone of abstract speculative and dated language without losing dramatic appeal — the book has even been called a "Hollywood thriller." No other writer of our time, with the possible exception of W. H. Auden, has exhibited such fluency and narrative ability in so many styles. Only Faulkner has approached his mastery of colorful vernacular speech, and even Faulkner, whose highly personal flavor so permeates everything he writes, does not achieve the individualized authenticity or the variety of Warren's dialects.

Warren's ear is uncommonly acute, but the most valuable faculty he possesses is human insight, a shrewd and at the same time sympathetic ability to penetrate imaginatively into the inner life of his characters. In the most caustic vignette offered through Jack Burden's squinted eyes, the pity of human wastage is never lost. Warren's sense of "irreducible evil" and of human frailty permits an extremely wide range to a natural sympathy that is completely devoid

of sentimentalism — ironic in the Richards sense that it is immune to irony. The sympathy does have limits, marked at one end by a Bogan Murdock and at the other by a Carlos Bumps, the upper and lower cases of the dollar sign. But the humanism that can embrace Senator Tollivers, Uncle Lew Calhouns, Sugar Boys and Sadie Burkes and Percival Skroggs gives to the intellectual and symbolic dialectic of the novels a warm and vibrant concretion.

Warren as a writer of fiction cannot be better described than in his own definition of the philosophical novelist: "one for whom the documentation of the world is constantly striving to rise to the level of generalization about values, for whom the image strives constantly to rise to symbol, for whom images always fall into a dialectical configuration, for whom the urgency of experience, no matter how vividly and strongly experience may enchant, is the urgency to know the meaning of experience. . . . For him the very act of composition [is] a way of knowing, a way of exploration."

RUTH HERSCHBERGER:

Deer Season

And his license bathed in blood,
I saw it, saw it, saw it bathed
In the purest, most truculent blood,
His horns were poised, dear horns,
I saw them grave as tombstones,
They were flying through the water,
That great hide curled, with flowery curls,
And soon the tail, waist high,
The cleft hoof, all, all,
It amazed as a dream dazes,
It was a deer loose, license wet-down,
It was a dear buck, it died that hour.
There won't be another, there won't be
Another with points as strong, with a hoof
Darkened and sharpened and damned
With a cloven being, with a clove for season.

EDWIN HONIG:

Elegy

What shall I hope for if not your life
In the sane darkness among traps,
Shrill dangers coloring your throat,
Your kidnapping hands like freed
Roots red as my oldest thoughts
Of love, your eyes and the shapes
They survive when nothing alive loves you?

What can answer the forgotten lie
If not your yearlong silence, the fog
That rushes in to greet all hubbubs, all
Lights, all surprises, and settles down,
Forgotten stranger, like the drowned
Ship awareness plunders on the bottom
In the silence that echoes light?

In the same hollow where I reach
For you are that day's little corpses,
Their wasted smiles, vague, almost
Dead because they did not know us
Or pretended not to, though now as
On that day I praise and hold fast
Auras real as bones to touch,

And ask, who if not you remembers
What killed them in the willows
On that day with the broad horse
Under you and the lake frost massed
To a crescendo of road lights
Awaiting your hoofbeats still to come —
Then someone, known and unknown, a mumbler,

Intruding between us as we met
To smile us humbly down and say,
Apologizing, that I lied,

Waiting to see if I could finish my
Pale greeting while the eyes
Of your horse grew glassy and I
Lifted anger till my feet were dead?

Who, I ask, raised his sudden
Children if not you escaping
Through the crackling weather, following
The willows already dead, the sink
Of frost as the lake all spring
Leaked blood and I, sinewing
My abandonment, ate dung?

The children of his smile are dead
And you, horseless hunter, still
Copy his guile prints, old style,
To lure them home like deeds to call
You father, but their corpses dangle
From my smile and (do you know?) I'll
Never rest till you too are dead.

The Tall Toms

All told the gray world
Sponges hopelessly on swift
Tall Toms, fliers in the
Howling highways, scorchers
Of the lush long countries.

Hats on or off they
Head through glass,
Through bowls of
Winter roses, through
Women hard as diamonds.

Floods and crosses
Kiss their shoes, and
Trolleys late for work
Pray like snails till
Sirens rinse the streets.

Their failure is success
In the eye highballing
White and black, and if
They end, even grim lids in
Grass jaws ponder over them.

A Man

How old is a man when he takes his life in his own
Bare hands and crumples it into a wad? How heavy
He is and strong beyond his knowing, a Samson
Of broken causes, whitened and bleeding his brain
To fix the one cliff passing clearly his own
Dark ship. Past this wishmark he pushes, willing it out,
To the last pulsing black nerve of his sleep.

Whose hero is he when it's done and the world
Anyhow chokes on a mouthful: Was he sick?
Was he broke? Was he right in the head? Did he love
His dead wife too much? Then munching it down
With the cold cuts insists, It took guts! — meaning not
That he may have been right, but the thing was almost as great
As fear's tyrannical acts where praises are pinned.

Many men who grow old so fast they are dead
On their feet do not tumble from twelfth-storey windows
Or smother regrets roped stiff to a stone
In the creek. Those who do, trouble our sleep
For a week while we reel to our jobs in the glare
Of inscrutable chances, heaped with a criminal hunch,
Stranger than wolves at large among friendly sheep.

Somehow, though chipper as ever the minute before,
The minute nobody looked he did it, alone,
With the handiest thing — or planned it for months,
Paid his debts, left notes to his cousins, even a text
For the preacher. He was friend to a friend (surly or dull
Or quick), who now for a honey-eyed moment is young
As someone remembers, old as the wine-dark sea.

JOHN LOGAN:

A Young Pagan's Saturday

Hiking out to Radcliffe School
We took our shoes off in the stubble
Past the graveyard; and I was startled
By the color but not the pain
That touched me as I ran.

We swarmed the woods around and looked
For fun and then for fuel and packed
Enough to maintain at a roar
A very satisfying fire.
And we set our mouths on the rare

Hope of baked young corn
And raided a field behind a barn;
Letting the fire at one side burn
To ash we buried there our plunder,
And after, happily ate the cinder

Which every swelling ear became.
Then later racing along the rim
Of Indian Gully, swifter
Than fear, light as laughter,
I felt some creature

Suddenly flare with beauty
At the back of my eye. Already
I knew my limbs and body
Sang on me sometimes:
But this rang brighter than my arms.

And coming back we stopped to play
Some hide-and-go-seek among the graves;
I hid a while and searched the stone
Faces for mother, then ran on
Where the groves were quick with pine.

JULES ROMAINS:

Light, Light, Somewhat Revolving . . .

Translated by Charles Guenther

Light, light, somewhat revolving, somewhat dulled!

The mist's and dampness' trial at motion which
Collects a heaven's matter from the pavements.

The day not yet arrived inspires the cloud.
Here all the world's best things are visible
That stir and torture and transform themselves.

All life's a prey to native apprehensions.
A kind of blue and rosy impetus
Entangles wisps of sleep with dragging rain.

But nothing moves in the bare branches. Scarcely
Does water tremble underneath the gate,
Do grasses ripple on the slopes, or farther,
Reflections strike a wall above the rampart.

What cession, what unravelling of all life!
Nothing prevents an avenue from unrolling
And falling from the city to the port.
The wagons, rumblings of the earth, the whispers
Of dreams escaped and running toward the ships!

The wind that walks this street is not asleep;
It's cold with sleeplessness, shakes with fatigue.
It takes you, though, and adds you to its anguish;
There is no clothing that will shelter you;
There is no memory that's thick enough.
A gust, your heart's seized quickly like a heedless
Pedestrian who is left with empty cries.

But O how sweet was restlessness,
How full of joy was every sadness,
And how the bitterest morning wind
Had unction and benevolence!

How fine to tremble at the dawn!
How fine to live!
and even perhaps
How good it will have been to die!

RICHARD F. HUGO:

Beachthieves

Waves policed the sand to call
Me criminal. I played their game: stole
Shells for my table, climbed the stones
With loot. Wind shot at me with salt,
Stung my knuckles pink with guilt,
But laws like moon and slant prevailed.

A bird above me, in his hand
A shell I would not case, yet
Loaded as it was with ooze and meat
Became a famous jewel, circled in a raid,
His wing acknowledging I'd run
From tailing tides in tribute to his greed.

These to him were crucial:
Aim and height, hard target, his corkscrew fall
To where the take lay broken for his meal.

No sound of water fought the social
Claim, a dipping wing when he, black
Felon, aimless, dropped his felony on rock.

LORINE NIEDECKER:

Poem

So this was I
in my framed
young aloofness
unsuspecting
        what I filled

eager to remain
a smooth blonde cool
effect of light
an undiffused good take,
        a girl
        who couldn't bake

How I wish
I had someone to give
this pretty thing to
who'd keep it —
        something of me
        would shape

Woman with Umbrella

Lonely woman, not prompted
by freshness from the sky
to run with friends and laugh it off,
arrives unsparkling but dry —

she's felt the prongs of her own advance
through the crowded street,
knows that lonely
she is dangerous to meet.

Could You Be Right

He asked: Will man obsolesce
when he sends the rays against himself?
And she, sore-pressed: Absurd! —
obsolesce is not a word.

But think of Troy, it was a word
before we dug and found that world . . .
yet ah, girl with Helen's light,
could you be right?

JOSEPH E. DEWEY:

Seaman's Heart

I have so long lapped in the sea's lay,
Heard the red-throat funnels moan
Their dreary oil complaint,

Have lain awake and watched
The mast's majestic swing
Clatt'ring stars against stars,

Long lain in the nurse-sea lap,
Sickened of orange shores
And salt-packed from love-rot:

A heart that lies deep, deep
As the steady rolling holds down
the fish's leap,
Lays him cold against the bottom.

Swung up, and tow-swung,
Shuttled at the pilings,
The fish-smell that fringes cities.

NEIL WEISS:

Pavane

Born in a hurry, dear.
Even now I hardly have time to remember,
down here with the wet scraggling hair:
intimate beyond love is to lie back
and strum the entrails for no answer.

It's time to remember now.
You used dragon wings, I remember,
fine, ferrous, fine through water in the eye,
while we bussed to work, hurled disks,
broke thermos bottles in factory heats.

Rain in, rain out, eyes eyed things leaning,
flowering as periscope or camera emerges
rippling, awash with wisdom, music thingy . . .
Then tiresome erect when you had the sense
to stay fallen, sensible in that dark.

Flutes weren't more courageous.
There was a ghost in the cellar who played
violoncello, the slobby sobbing we grinned at —
but it was a trill down flute flying
the green-lightninged staircase brought you.

We have to march while you're still
(what have you done with your eyes).
Edge of blackness is silver before day
took the lamb and laced her to surprise
(what have you done with your eyes).

Rhythm of the deadmarch, thimbles bobbing —
drumcloth tight as flesh: grave girl,
you smiled and spat over our knee now rises
and falls, clothing falling as dead are skin
to us, and us to the dead. O what wild glowing!

Little Girl

The little girl lifts her thin breasts
in her hands, and faces moan in the walls.
Flesh is furring flesh where time began
and palpable the cream of chromosomes.

The careening back and tingling thigh
bless sweetness in the mouth and breast;
tongues fur over and utter the cry
of sleeping animals in the halls.

Rolling on and on, but still caught
in her hands, the sky bellows
like a muted horn — touched by her tips
it leaps to flesh, squeezed to form,

nursing a million hungry roofs.

Pleasure as Principle

Mirror all, and you in front
plying raw hair so, stuck
to the raw health of your fingers —
        this way that
a finger spell, placing music,
        a watching:

Deft so, deft so, and dreaming
the raw health of your fingers.

In a trance the dog's eye glaze
to a flat backstare of fingers,
        prickles pulling my face,
        silk splitting my mouth,
        the mirror lashed hard
        to your lines of volition.

Deft so, deft so, and dreaming
the raw health of your fingers.

G. A. BENDER:

Epithalamium

With the black outside the windows
The upstairs flat seemed adrift on night
—Removed as it was from the ground—and space and time.
Lost in dark air, awash on shadows,
The cells of light were isolate,
A glowing unit of raw bulbs
And peeling paper; a shining blurt
Of triumph in the gleaming refrigerator.
Inside, the voices were lost
In a tangle of extension cords,
But sometimes an inflection or a glance
Sent the tenants careening black through the past
To another dingy room where laughter
Had been the chief furnishing.
Sometimes the future skidded near:
One by one the nights grew later.

Honeymoon

Walking the magical, confusing city, they
Huddled and clung, exclaiming, wrapped in a soft fur
Of laughter. At night all the streets
Blurred into similar effervescent rivers of light.
In the daytime there arose a submerged dream
Of foreign buildings making air more golden. Fear,
Though they could not believe it, decorated their days;
The meaning of the buildings was in constant flight.

Later when they had emerged into the calm ways
Of meadows and fragrant, easy grasses there
Remained, chiefly, a memory of bitter-edged sights,
But sometimes the shape of a flower was disturbing.

SHERMAN PAUL:

Resolution at Walden

I

Walden was published in 1854, eight years before Thoreau died, some seven years after his life in the woods. His journal shows that he had proposed such a "poem" for himself as early as 1841, that its argument would be "the River, the Woods, the Ponds, the Hills, the Fields, the Swamps and Meadows, the Streets and Buildings, and the Villagers. Then Morning, Noon, and Evening, Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter, Night, Indian Summer, and the Mountains in the Horizon." Like *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* (1849) — "If one would reflect," Thoreau had written in 1837, "let him embark on some placid stream, and float with the current" — *Walden* took a long time maturing, a longer time, because it was more than the stream of his reflections. The *Week* had been written out of joyousness and to memorialize his most perfect excursion in nature. *Walden,* however, was Thoreau's recollected experience, recollected not in tranquillity, but in the years of what he himself called his "decay." Although one need only search the journals to find many of the events of *Walden* freshly put down, *Walden* itself reveals that Thoreau was now looking at these events with more experienced eyes: his long quarrel with society has intervened, his youthful inspiration had become more difficult to summon, the harvest of the *Week* he had hoped to bestow on the public lay in his attic, and, growing older, he was still without a vocation that others would recognize. In *Walden,* at once his victorious hymn to Nature, to her perpetual forces of life, inspiration and renewal, Thoreau defended his vocation by creating its eternal symbol.

The common moral of *Walden* is that of the virtue of simplicity; and simplicity is usually taken on the prudential level of economy with which Thoreau seemingly began the book. In terms of Thoreau's spiritual economy, however, simplicity was more than freedom from the burdens of a mortgaged life: it was an ascetic, a severe dicipline, like solitude for Emerson, by which Thoreau concentrated his forces and was able to confront the facts of life without the intervening barriers of society or possessions. For simplicity, Thoreau often sub-

stituted poverty, a word which both set him apart from his materialistic neighbors and hallowed his vocation with its religious associations of renunciation and higher dedication. It was the suitable condition for the spiritual crusader: the sign in a land of traders of his profession. But it also signified his inner condition. "By poverty," he said, "*i.e.* simplicity of life and fewness of incidents, I am solidified and crystallized, as a vapor or liquid by cold. It is a singular concentration of strength and energy and flavor. Chastity is perpetual acquaintance with the All. My diffuse and vaporous life becomes as frost leaves and spiculae radiant as gems on the weeds and stubble in a winter morning." Such poverty or purity was a necessity of *his* economy. "You think," he continued, "that I am impoverishing myself by withdrawing from men, but in my solitude I have woven for myself a silken web or *chrysalis,* and, nymph-like, shall ere long burst forth a more perfect creature, fitted for a higher society. By simplicity, commonly called poverty, my life is concentrated and so becomes organized, or a κόσμος, which before was inorganic and lumpish."

This was also the hope of his paean to spring in *Walden,* to "pass from the lumpish grub in the earth to the airy and fluttering butterfly." The purpose of his experiment at Walden Pond, begun near the end of his years of undisciplined rapture — Emerson said that the vital heat of the poet begins to ebb at thirty — was to build an organic life as consciously as he built his hut (and his book), and so retain his vital heat. "May I never," he had recorded in his journal, "let the vestal fire go out in my recesses." But there was desperation in his attempt to keep his vital heat, because it was only *vital* (or rather he felt it so) when he was maturing beyond the lumpish, grub-like existence. As well as the advocacy of the organic life which promised renewal and growth, *Walden* for Thoreau filled the immediate need of self-therapy. In the serenity and joy of his art this is often overlooked, but it is there in the journals behind the book. And the greatness of *Walden,* from this perspective at least, is the resolution Thoreau was able to fulfill through art. By creating an organic form he effected his own resolution for rebirth: by conscious endeavor he recaptured, if not the youthful ecstasy of his golden age, a mature serenity.

This serenity, however, is still alert, wakeful, tense. It was a victory of discipline. "That aim in life is highest," Thoreau noted during the composition of *Walden,* "which requires the highest and finest discipline." That aim was highest, that discipline the highest vocation, be-

cause the goal and fulfillment of all transcendental callings was purity — a oneness with Nature in which the untarnished mirror of the soul reflected the fullness of being. The cost of doing without conventional life was not too great for Thoreau, considering his desire to "perceive things truly and simply." He believed that "a fatal coarseness is the result of mixing in the trivial affairs of men." And to justify his devotion to purity he wrote *Walden,* a promise of the higher society a man can make when he finds his *natural* center, a record of things and events so simple and fundamental that all lives less courageous and principled are shamed by the *realometer* it provides. Like other masterworks of its time, it has the unique strain of American romanticism: behind its insistent individualism and desire for experience, there is still more earnest conviction of the necessity of virtue.

II

In the concluding pages of *Walden,* Thoreau remarked that "in this part of the world it is considered a ground for complaint if a man's writings admit of more than one interpretation." With his contemporaries, Emerson, Hawthorne, Melville, he wanted the "volatile truth" of his words to "betray the inadequacy of the residual statement." He would have considered *Walden* a failure if it served only to communicate an eccentric's refusal to go along with society, if, taken literally, its spiritual courage was thinned to pap for tired businessmen long since beyond the point of no return. For *Walden* was *his* myth: "A fact truly and absolutely stated," he said, "is taken out of the region of common sense and acquires a mythologic or universal significance." This was the extravagance he sought — this going beyond the bounds. For him, only the fact stated without reference to convention or institution, with only reference to the self which has tasted the world and digested it, which has been "drenched" and "saturated" with truth, is properly humanized — is properly myth. Primarily to immerse himself in truth, to merge himself with the law of Nature, and to humanize this experience by the alchemy of language, Thoreau went to Walden. There, free from external references, he could purify himself and live a sympathetic existence, alive to the currents of being. What he reported, then, would be the experience of the self in its unfolding and exploration of the "not-me." The literal record would merely remain the residual statement — no one knew better the need for concrete fact; but it would also yield a *translated* meaning.

The whole of *Walden* is an experience of the microcosmic and cosmic travels of the self. At Walden Pond, Thoreau wrote, "I have, as it were, my own sun and moon and stars, and a little world all to myself." Thoreau, of course, was a great traveller, if only a saunterer. The profession of traveller appealed to his imagination; it was, he said, the "best symbol of our life." And "Walking" was the best short statement of his way of life, of his journey to the holy land. He yearned, he wrote in 1851, "for one of those old, meandering, dry, uninhabited roads, which lead away from towns. . . ." He wanted to find a place "where you can walk and think with least obstruction, there being nothing to measure progress by; where you can pace when your breast is full, and cherish your moodiness; where you are not in false relations with men. . . ." He wanted "a road where I can travel," where "I can walk, and recover the lost child that I am without any ringing of a bell." The road he wanted led to Walden. There he regained the primal world, and lived the pristine initiation into consciousness over again. "Both place and time were changed," he said in *Walden,* "and I dwelt nearer to those parts of the universe and to those eras in history which had most attracted me."

In this effort to live out of time and space or to live in all times and places, *Walden* immediately suggests Melville's *Moby-Dick*. Melville had written another voyage of the self on which he explored reality, charted the constituents of a chaos, and raised his discovery to the universal level of archetypal experience. He had elaborated the myth of the hunter which Thoreau also employed in the chapter on "Higher Laws." "There is a period in the history of the individual, as of the race," he wrote, "when hunters are the 'best men'. . . ." Hunting, he added, "is oftenest the young man's introduction to the forest [Melville's sea], and the most original part of himself. He goes thither at first as a hunter and fisher, until at last, if he has the seeds of a better life in him, he distinguishes his proper objects. . . ." It was in these "wild" employments of his youth that Thoreau acknowledged his "closest acquaintance with Nature." For Nature revealed herself to the hunter more readily than to "philosophers or poets even, who approach her with expectation" — or, as Melville knew, to the participant and not the observer of life. If Thoreau had long since given up hunting, he still found a sustaining link with the wild in his bean field.

There are obvious differences, of course, in the quality of these travels — each author had his spiritual torment, Melville the need for belief, Thoreau the need for recommunion. But both were pro-

jecting the drama of their selves, a drama that in both instances ended in rebirth; and the methods both employed were remarkably similar. Each abstracted himself from the conventional world, established a microcosm by which to test the conventions, and worked at a basic and heroic occupation. For example, the village stands in the same symbolic relation to Thoreau at Walden that the land does to Melville's sea; and it is the occupation in both that supplies the residual statement. In Thoreau's case, it is also a primitive concern with essentials: building his hut, planting, hoeing and harvesting his beans, fishing and naturalizing. And the nature of the occupation gives each its spiritual quality, because whaling (butchery) and colonizing (building from scratch) are projections of different visions of the universe of which only the central similarity remains — the exploration of self.

But this similarity is a sufficient signature for both; one recognizes the existential kinship. At the conclusion of *Walden* Thoreau declared: "Explore thyself . . . Be . . . the Mungo Park, the Lewis and Clark and Frobisher, of your own streams and oceans. . . ." —

". . . . . be
Expert in home-cosmography."

For "there are continents and seas in the moral world to which every man is an isthmus or an inlet, yet unexplored by him, . . . [and] it is easier to sail many thousand miles through cold and storm and cannibals, in a government ship, with five hundred men and boys to assist one, than it is to explore the private sea, the Atlantic and Pacific Ocean of one's being alone." Melville at Pittsfield would have agreed that "herein are demanded the eye and the nerve." But if Melville needed the watery two-thirds of the world and the great whale for this quest, Thoreau, who had the gift of enlarging the small, needed only the pond and its pickerel. And where Melville needed the destructive forces of the sea to mirror himself, Thoreau, who had seen the place of violence in the total economy of nature, needed only the recurrence of the seasons.

III

Walden was Thoreau's quest for a reality he had lost, and for this reason it was a quest for purity. Purity meant a return to the spring (and springtime) of life, to the golden age of his youth and active senses, when the mirror of his self was not clouded by self-conscious-

ness. *Walden,* accordingly, follows the cycle of developing consciousness, a cycle that parallels the change of the seasons. It is a recapitulation of Thoreau's development (and the artistic reason he put the experience of two years into one) — a development from the sensuous, active, external (unconscious *and* out-of-doors) summer of life, through the stages of autumnal consciousness and the withdrawal inward to the self-reflection of winter, to the promise of ecstatic rebirth in the spring. It was a matter of purification because Thoreau had reached the winter of decay at the time *Walden* was being revised for the press. With consciousness had come the knowledge of the "reptile" and "sensual" which he knew could not "be wholly expelled." "I fear," he wrote, "that it [the sensual] may enjoy a certain health of its own; that we may be well, yet not pure." For the mind's approach to God, he knew that the severest discipline was necessary: his chapter on "Higher Laws" is concerned almost entirely with the regimen of the appetites because "man flows at once to God when the channel of purity is open." The undeniable sensual energy — the "generative energy" — he had unconsciously enjoyed in the ecstasy of youth, now needed control. "The generative energy," he wrote, "which, when we are loose, dissipates and makes us unclean, when we are continent invigorates and inspires us." He was consciously using instinct for higher ends, seeking chastity by control.

In Walden Pond he saw the image of his purified self — that pristine, eternal self he hoped to possess. In 1853, while he was working on his book, he noted in his journal: "How watchful we must be to keep the crystal well that we were made, clear! — that it be not made turbid by our contact with the world, so that it will not reflect objects." The pond, he recalled, was one of the "oldest scenes stamped on my memory." He had been taken to see it when he was four years old. Now, playing his flute beside its waters, his beans, corn and potatoes replacing the damage of the years, he felt that another aspect was being prepared "for new infant eyes," that "even I have at length helped to clothe that fabulous landscape of my infant dreams. . . ." Later, he recalled his youthful reveries on its waters: "I have spent many an hour, when I was younger, floating over its surface as the zephyr willed . . . dreaming awake. . . ." But time (and woodchoppers) had ravished its shores: "My Muse may be excused," he explained, "if she is silent henceforth. How can you expect the birds to sing when their groves are cut down?" It was the confession of the Apollo who had had to serve Admetus, a confession he made again in "Walking." Visited by fewer thoughts each year, he said that "the

grove in our minds is laid waste — sold to feed unnecessary fires of ambition. . . ."

But Thoreau discovered at Walden that even though the groves were cut down, the pond itself remained the same — it "best preserves its purity." "It is itself unchanged," he learns, "the same water my youthful eyes fell on; all the change is in me. . . . It is perennially young. . . ." Catching sight of his eternal self and realizing that the waste of years had only touched his shore, his empirical self, he exclaimed, "Why, here is Walden, the same woodland lake that I discovered so many years ago . . . it is the same liquid joy and happiness to itself and its Maker, ay, and it *may* be to me." The pond, so constant, clear and pure, was truly the *Walled in* pond, the undefiled soul of which the Thoreau-in-decay said, "I am its stony shore. . . ."

If Thoreau spent his youth drifting with the inspiring zephyrs on Walden's surface, he now plumbed its depths, angled for its pickerel and its bottom. For it was the purpose of *Walden* to find bottom, to affirm reality; and the reality Thoreau discovered in the soul and in the whole economy of Nature he found at the bottom of the pond. What renewed his faith was the sign of the never-dying, all-promising generative force which he symbolized when he wrote: ". . . a bright green weed is brought up on anchors even in midwinter." The hope of a renewed life, rhapsodized in the concluding chapters of *Walden* and there symbolized in the hardy blade of grass — the green flame of life —, was the assurance he now had that "there is nothing inorganic."

And by sounding the bottom Thoreau also discovered the law of the universe and of the intellect that made possible his organic participation in the process of renewal and provided him the guarantee of its expression in natural objects. "The regularity of the bottom and its conformity to the shores and the range of the neighboring hills were so perfect," he wrote, "that a distant promontory betrayed itself in the soundings quite across the pond, and its direction could be determined by observing the opposite shore." He found, too, that the intersection of the lines of greatest length and breadth coincided with the point of greatest depth; and he suggested that this physical law might be applied to ethics. "Draw lines through the length and breadth of the aggregate of a man's particular daily behaviors and waves of life into his coves and inlets, and where they intersect will be the height or depth of his character. Perhaps we need only to know how his shores tend and his adjacent country or circumstances, to infer his depth and concealed bottom." *Walden* was just such an account of

Thoreau's moral topography, and if the lines were drawn, the pond itself would be his center. For wasn't the eternal self, like the pond, "'God's Drop'"?

The search for the bottom was conscious exploration. Here, and in the passages on fishing for pickerel and chasing the loon, Thoreau was not a naturalist but a natural historian of the intellect, using the natural facts as symbols for his quest for inspiration and thought. In "Brute Neighbors" he had asked, "Why do precisely these objects which we behold make a world?" And he had answered that "they are all beasts of burden . . . made to carry some portion of our thoughts." The natural world merely reflects ourselves. Having overcome his doubts of this central article of transcendental faith by assuring himself of the regularity of Walden's depth — that the hidden reality corresponded to its visible shores, that "Heaven is under our feet as well as over our heads" — he could trust once more his own projection of mood and thought to be reflected in its proper and corresponding object. He had noted in his journal that the poet "sees a flower or other object, and it is beautiful or affecting to him because it is a symbol of his thought, and what he indistinctly feels or perceives is matured in some other organization. The objects I behold correspond to my mood." His concern with the pond and the seasons, then, was symbolic of his soul's preoccupation. "Our moulting season . . . must be the crisis in our lives," he said; and like the loon he retired to a solitary pond to spend it. There, like the caterpillar — to use another symbol —, "by an internal industry and expansion" he cast off his "wormy coat."

IV

Thoreau went to Walden to become an unaccommodated man, to shed his lendings and to find his naked and sufficient self. Of this, the pond was the symbol. He also went to clothe himself in response to his inner needs. Building an organic life was again a conscious endeavor which was chastened by the necessity of maintaining his vital heat — the heat of body and spirit; for his purpose was not to return to nature, but to combine "the hardiness of . . . savages with the intellectualness of the civilized man." "The civilized man," he said, "is a more experienced and wiser savage," meaning, of course, that the instinctive life was most rewarding when channeled by intellectual principles. "What was *enthusiasm* in the young man," he wrote during the crisis of his life, "must become *temperament* in the mature man." The woodchopper, the animal man, must be educated to consciousness, and still retain his innocence. Properly seen in the

total economy of Nature the once freely taken gift of inspiration must be earned by perceiving the law of Nature, by the tragic awareness that inspiration, like its source, has its seasons. The villagers, Thoreau wrote indignantly, "instead of going to the pond to bathe or drink, are thinking to bring its waters, which should be as sacred as the Ganges at least, to the village in a pipe, to wash their dishes with! — to earn their Walden by the turning of a cock or drawing of a plug!" The spiritual soldier had learned that after laying siege to Nature, only passivity would bring victory.

Thoreau earned his Walden by awaiting the return of spring, by sharing the organic process. Of this his hut and his bean-field became the symbols. The latter, as we have seen, helped to renew the aspect of the pond; as the work of the active self, it was rightly an alteration of the shore. And the pond, as the pure, eternal self — the "perfect forest mirror" —, was the calm surface on which these purifying activities were reflected. Thoreau labored in his bean-field because he took seriously Emerson's injunction to action in *The American Scholar*. He knew that the higher ends of the activity of the empirical self were self-consciousness, that the eternal self, the passive center, only acquired consciousness by observing the empirical self at work on the circumference. He recognized "a certain doubleness by which I can stand as remote from myself as from another." "However intense my experience," he wrote, "I am conscious of the presence of and criticism of a part of me, which, as it were, is not part of me, but spectator, sharing no experience, but taking note of it. . . ." The reward of activity, the result of this drama of selves, was self-reflection, insight. "All perception of truth is the detection of an analogy," Thoreau noted in the journal; "we reason from our hands to our head." And so through the labor of the hands, even to the point of drudgery, he was "determined to know beans." He did not need the beans for food but for sympathy with Nature; he needed to work them because, as he said, "They attached me to the earth, and so I got strength like Antaeus." His fields were also symbolic of his attempt to link the wild and the cultivated. And the "immeasurable crop" his devoted hoeing yielded came from the penetration of the earth's crust — a knowledge of the depths similar in significance to Melville's descent to the unwarped primal world. "I disturbed," Thoreau wrote, "the ashes of unchronicled nations who in primeval times lived under these heavens. . . ." In his bean-field beside Walden he was not serving Admetus, for he had found a way to delve beneath the "established order on the surface."

The prudential value of this labor came to $16.94, but the spiritual value was the realization that the Massachusetts soil could sustain the seeds of virtue — that in Thoreau's case at least, the seed had not lost its vitality and that the harvest of his example might be "a new generation of men." Later on, in the chapter on "Former Inhabitants," he again disturbed the surface by delving into the past, comparing his life at Walden to the defeated lives of its previous occupants. Here, Thoreau expressed his desire for the higher society, the ideal community in which he could wholly participate and which he hoped he was beginning. "Again, perhaps, Nature will try," he wrote, "with me for the first settler. . . . I am not aware that any man has ever built on the spot which I occupy." Like Joyce's Finnegan, he was to be the father of cities, not those reared on ancient sites, but cities growing out of the union with the earth. Looking back to Concord from the distances of past and future, Thoreau felt that *Walden* was not so much his quarrel with society, but an expiation. "Through our recovered innocence," he confessed, "we discern the innocence of our neighbors." He was willing to share his regeneration, for above the constant interplay of Walden and village, there hovered a vision of an ideal village that transcended both. In the radical sense of the word, Thoreau, who had given up the wilder pursuit of hunting for farming, was a civilizer.

When he came to build his hut — the container of his vital heat — Thoreau used second-hand materials and borrowed tools and showed his dependence on civilization. He did not abandon collective wisdom: his intention was to practice philosophy, to come directly at a conduct of life, that is, to simplify, or experience the solid satisfaction of knowing immediately the materials that made his life. He scrupulously accounts for these materials, he tells their history — where he got the boards, who used them and under what conditions. And James Collins' life in the shanty is implicitly contrasted with Thoreau's, especially in Thoreau's remark that he purified the boards by bleaching and warping them in the sun. He also acknowledged his debt for tools. He did not push his economy too far, to the verge of self-sufficiency that some believe necessary to a defense of *Walden* as social gospel. He said — and this is the only way of repaying one's social indebtedness — that he sharpened the tools by use. In a similar way, he applied the funded wisdom of man to his experiment on life. Individualist that he was, he often confirmed his experience by the experience of others: he made his use of the classics and scriptures, Indian lore and colonial history, pay their way. He was starting from scratch, but he knew that the materials were old.

The building of the hut is so thoroughly described because on the symbolic level it is the description of the building of the body for his soul. A generation that was read in Swedenborg might have been expected to see this correspondence. "It would be worth the while," Thoreau suggested, "to build still more deliberately than I did, considering, for instance, what foundation a door, a window, a cellar, a garret, have in the nature of man, and perchance never raising any superstructure until we found a better reason for it than our temporal necessities even." He was speaking the language of functionalism that Swedenborgianism had popularized; and after listing his previous shelters, he remarked that "this frame, so slightly clad, was a sort of crystallization around me, and reacted on the builder."

Thoreau built his hut as he needed it, to meet the progressing seasons of developing consciousness, a development which was as organic as the seasons. He subscribed to Emerson's use of the cycle of day and night as the symbol of the ebb and flow of inspiration and extended it to the seasons: "The day is an epitome of the year. The night is the winter, the morning and evenings are spring and fall, and the noon is the summer." In this way be also followed Emerson's "history" of consciousness. "The Greek," Emerson wrote, "was the age of observation; the Middle Age, that of fact and thought; ours, that of reflection and ideas." In *Walden,* Thoreau's development began in the summer, the season of the senses and of delicious out-of-door life. This was the period when he was in sympathetic communion with Nature, refreshed by the tonic of wildness. The chapters on "Sounds" and "Solitude" belong to this period, during which he enjoyed the atmospheric presence of Nature so essential to his inspiration. And the hut, which he began in the spring and first occupied at this time, was merely a frame through which Nature readily passed.

When the "north wind had already begun to cool the pond," Thoreau said that he first began to "inhabit my house." During the autumn season of harvest and preparation for winter, he lathed and plastered; and finally as winter approached he built his fireplace and chimney, "the most vital part of the house. . . ." By the fireside, in the period of reflection and inner life, he lingered most, communing with his self.* It was the time of soul-searching, when he cut through the pond's ice and saw that "its bright sanded floor [was] the same as in the summer"; and before the ice broke up he surveyed its bottom. Even in this desolate season Thoreau looked for all the signs of

* Hawthorne in "Peter Goldthwaite's Treasure" and Melville in "I and My Chimney" also made imaginative use of the house and the chimney.

spring's organic promise, and in the representative anecdote of his despair, he told of Nature's sustaining power: "After a still winter night I awoke with the impression that some question had been put to me, which I had been endeavoring in vain to answer in my sleep, as what — how — when— where? But there was dawning Nature, in whom all creatures live, looking in at my broad windows with serene and satisfied face, and no questions on *her* lips. I awoke to an answered question, to Nature and daylight." Even in the winter of his discontent, Nature seemed to him to say " 'Forward' " and he could calmly await the inevitable golden age of spring.

V

Rebirth came with spring. In one of the best sustained analogies in transcendental writing, the chapter "Spring," Thoreau reported ecstatically the translation of the frozen sand and clay of the railroad cut into the thawing streams of life. Looking at the sand foliage — the work of an hour — he said that "I am affected as if . . . I stood in the laboratory of the Artist who made the world and me. . . ." The Artist of the world, like Thoreau and like Goethe whom he had in mind, labored "with the idea inwardly" and its correspondence, its flowering, was the leaf. Everywhere Thoreau perceived this symbol of creation, and in ascending forms from the sand, the animal body, the feathers and wings of birds, to the "airy" butterfly. "Thus it seemed," he wrote, "that this one hillside illustrated the principle of all the operations of Nature. The Maker of this earth but patented a leaf." And the moral Thoreau drew from this illustration was the central law of his life, for it was the law of renewal: "This earth is not a mere fragment of dead history, stratum upon stratum like the leaves of a book, to be studied by geologists and antiquarians chiefly, but living poetry like the leaves of a tree, which precede flowers and fruit, — not a fossil earth, but a living earth; compared with whose great central life all animal and vegetable life is merely parasitic. Its throes will heave our exuviae from their graves." And furthermore the law applied to man and the higher society: ". . . the institutions upon it [the earth] are plastic like clay in the hands of the potter."

For Thoreau, who had found that the law of his life was the law of Life, these perceptions were the stuff of ecstasy. Reveling in the sound of the first sparrow, Thoreau wrote, "What at such a time are histories, chronologies, traditions, and all written revelations?" The spring had brought forth "the symbol of perpetual youth," the grass-blade; human life, having died down to its root, now put forth "its

green blade to eternity." Walden Pond had begun to melt — "Walden was dead and is alive again." The change in the flowing sand, from excremental to spiritual, had also been accomplished in him by the discipline of purity: "The change from storm and winter to serene and mild weather, from dark and sluggish hours to bright and elastic ones." Like the dawning of inspiration this "memorable crisis" was "seemingly instantaneous at last." "Suddenly," Thoreau recorded that change, "an influx of light filled my house, though evening was at hand, and the clouds of winter still overhung it, and the eaves were dripping with sleety rain. I looked out of the window, and lo! where yesterday was cold grey ice there lay the transparent pond already calm and full of hope as in a summer evening, reflecting a summer evening sky in its bosom, though none was visible overhead, as if it had intelligence with some remote horizon. I heard a robin in the distance, the first I had heard for many a thousand years, methought, whose note I shall not forget for many a thousand more, — the same sweet and powerful song as of yore. . . . So I came in, and shut the door, and passed my first spring night in the woods."

With the coming of spring had come "the creation of Cosmos out of Chaos and the realization of the Golden Age." And with his renewal had come the vindication of his life of purity. He had recorded what he felt was nowhere recorded, "a simple and irrepressible satisfaction with the gift of life. . . ." He had suggested what the eye of the partridge symbolized to him, not merely "the purity of infancy, but a wisdom clarified by experience." He had recounted the experience of his purification so well that even the reader who accepts only the residual statement feels purified. "I do not say," he wisely wrote at the end of *Walden,* "that John or Jonathan will realize all this [the perfect summer life]; but such is the character of that morrow which mere lapse of time can never make to dawn." To affirm this eternal present, to restore, as he said in "The Service," the original of which Nature is the reflection, he fashioned *Walden* as he himself lived, after the example of the artist of the city of Kouroo. This parable unlocks the largest meaning of the book. The artist of Kouroo "was disposed to strive after perfection," Thoreau wrote; and striving, he lived in the eternity of inspiration which made the passing of dynasties, even eras, an illusion. In fashioning his staff, merely by minding his destiny and his art, he had made a new world "with full and fair proportions." The result, Thoreau knew, could not be "other than wonderful," because "the material was pure, and his art was pure. . . ."

JACK MATTHEWS:

Dime

I could tell that there was something wrong with Harold. In the half-light from the moon I could see only the angular outline of his forehead and nose — with maybe a suggestion of the lower lip sticking out when he drank from the pint bottle, but I knew he was thinking about something. He had been worried ever since he had gotten the money.

"How'd you get the money, Harold?" I asked.

He gave me the same old dodge he had given me that afternoon when I'd asked. "Oh, I just come across it." He rustled around in his blanket like a nervous old cat. I could hear him breathing heavily as he searched for something under the old pair of pants he used for a pillow.

The moon had broken clear of the stables and trees now, and I could see everything. It was very quiet. Up the way I could hear some of them snoring and, now and then, one of them turning over or talking in his sleep. A lot of them probably had hunger cramps. But there wasn't a one of them that wouldn't rather drink than eat — even if he was starving.

A horse stirred somewhere in the stable and I looked out at the ghostly outline of the race track lying in the moonlight. The white fence around it shone glossy and clean. Somewhere, far away, a freight was laboring up an incline.

I heard the clank of change and Harold stiffened with alarm. "Quiet!" he whispered in a strained voice, making a rapid motion with his hand. He already had the bottle under the blanket. His big nose was pointed up, like a hound's, sniffing the air for danger. When nothing happened he turned to me again, and said, "Don't ever let the sound of money get to them. They can hear money like they can smell whiskey."

With his face pale he handed me the bottle and I drank. We wouldn't have had a chance if they'd smelled the whiskey. They'd follow a man for days for a drink or a dime.

Harold's hand was shaking when he took the pint back from me. He took another quick jerk at it and started coughing. The bottle had disappeared under the blanket by the time the first rasping sound

had rattled out of his throat. Finally, he got up and walked over to the fence row to urinate. Where had he gotten the money?

When he came back he was teetering. We hadn't had whiskey for a month and I felt it too. The stars whirled through the heavens, singing the song of morning. That's how it felt to me, anyway. But Harold was more worried than ever and the sweat was standing in tiny, cold pimples on his face.

"I'm getting out of here," he said, setting his jaw as he said it.

"They'll get you if you try to get away," I said.

"No they won't. I'm leaving the whiskey and the money here."

"Here? You're crazy."

"No. I'm going to leave them with you." I could see his eyes glisten at me as he said this.

"Where you going?" I asked.

"I'm going with them to Hamilton. So's they won't suspect anything. I'll just go along with them and you'll stay here. Pretend you're sick. They'll be sure to stick with me because they'll know by tomorrow anyway that I got some booze and some money."

"Then what happens?" I asked.

"Well, when we get to Hamilton and the races start I'll just slip out. They'll try me by the time we get settled there and find out I ain't got nothing. If they found over four bucks on me and two pints of whiskey they'd kill me," he said with his forehead drawn up in tight wrinkles.

"Where'd you get it?" I asked again.

"Never you mind." He handed me the money and the two other pints he had bought. "You know, boy, what'll happen if you try to double-cross me?"

"I won't try to do that," I whispered, grabbing him by his skinny arm and shaking him.

"Okay, but just don't. I don't know why I got to trust you. I sure ain't trusted none of them and I've knowed some of them a lot longer than I've knowed you."

"Maybe that's why you don't trust them anymore'n you do," I said.

I saw his gold tooth flash as he grinned. "You're all right," he said. "Now hide that money and them bottles." He looked around, trying to think of a place.

I was feeling dizzy and my stomach wasn't so good. "I don't need to hide it. I'll just keep the money and put the bottles in my poke."

"Don't do that. Don't you know that they'll smell the whiskey on

you tomorrow morning and be sniffing around you all day?"

"No they won't. I'm going to lose that whiskey right now." I got up and walked over behind the stables and started heaving. It didn't need much help, but I even stuck my finger down my throat so I'd be sure to get all the smell out. When I came back I could see Harold lying prone and shaking with silent laughing.

"Okay, they won't smell anything after all you just tossed up," he giggled.

"They'll smell it on you," I said.

"So I got aholt of a bottle somewhere. I got the empty right here. It'll hurt their tender feelings a little bit, but they won't be too mad since it's all gone. Now git your blanket farther away from mine, so's they won't think we been talking. And I'll be back in a week."

"What time they going to Hamilton tomorrow?" I asked.

"Oh, they'll be straggling out all day. About half of them will try to get that C&O freight that you just heard a while ago. It goes by a little after sunup."

"That the one you catching?"

"Yep. Now you take care, boy."

I've known them to follow a man for days when they knew he had a quarter. They'd worry him to death. They wouldn't let him spend it. If he tried to buy a beer and a hamburger they'd eat it right out from under him, pretending they were his pals. And not only that, they'd get the fifteen cents change. That's the way they were. It wasn't simply the money; it was also the idea that somebody would have something they couldn't have.

So with all that money I was glad to see so many of them — almost all of them — clear out before dawn. They knew I was sick. I heard them talking about it. Harold had told one of them and in five minutes all of them had known.

While they washed themselves off and got their blankets together, I just lay there, pretending to be asleep. Every now and then I let out a little moan. I could tell they heard me — and were listening — by the slight lull in their talking when I moaned.

"Whatsa matter? Is he just hungry?" one of them asked.

"Nah," another voice came back. "He just got hisself a belly ache."

I didn't feel too good, as a matter of fact. And I must have looked a little pale and shaky to the stragglers who were still around when I finally got up. I went over and doused my head in cold water and

took a good long drink. My hand was shaking as I worked the pump.

I needed something in my stomach, but I didn't dare eat anything as long as any of them were around. So I just lay in my blanket with my eyes closed. Once, I stayed there so long that way that my eyes started hurting and my head felt as if it were swinging around on the end of a long string. I sat up. One of them was looking at me. God, I was hungry! Especially since I could feel the change and dollar bills in my pocket. I had to be careful and not rattle the change.

We looked at each other for a little bit, and finally he went away. It was almost noon. I looked around, but I couldn't see anyone. Just an old Negro picking strawberries across the fence from me. I got up and walked out to the road. There were two figures way up there on the rise, walking the other way. They were gone!

The crickets were making a terrible din and the sun was making my head feel still swimmier as I started down the road in the other direction for town. In another month it would be September. What would they all be doing then? What would I be doing? Would Harold and I be together? Would we have escaped by then? Or would we still be bumming around, from race track to race track? Maybe raking leaves on some fat woman's lawn or selling pop at a football game. But always near the horses. There was no perfume like horse manure.

I felt safe by now. I figured that most of them were getting pretty near Hamilton. And even the stragglers must be on the train. I pulled out one of the pints, right there on the road, and took a swig. I felt a little better after that.

I saw a farmer plowing behind some horses and I waved to him. Up the road a little farther there was a farmhouse and a woman out in back pumping water. I tipped my hat to her, just like Harold does. Only he looks funny when he does it, because he is so little and shabby and the gesture he makes is so elegant.

Once in town, I walked straight to a place I knew down near the tracks. They had pretty big hamburgers for a nickel, and the bartender had given me an extra half glass of beer once. There were four or five wooden steps up to the door. It was a little frame building covered with Mail Pouch signs and posters. There were big plate windows in front so you could see inside after you had walked up two or three steps.

It was on that third step that I saw them. I had just glanced in through the window and the open door. I had caught the eye of the

bartender who had recognized me and had nodded with a tired, sober look on his face. Then I had caught sight of them. It was just two of them, but they were sitting there in chairs, at a table with nothing on it, waiting for me. Who else could they have been waiting for? One of them saw me. He didn't look right at me or even past me, but I knew that he saw me. So they hadn't all gone to Hamilton!

Of course I whirled around and started walking quickly up the dusty street. About forty yards up there was an old fence which had a break in it of three or four slats. I looked around, but there was no one on the street in the heat of the day. They hadn't followed me!

I stepped through the fence and sat down. A couple of chickens jumped over a pile of wood up against the fence. If I hadn't had the money in my pocket or if I hadn't been too preoccupied at that instant I would have grabbed one and taken it down by the tracks to eat it. I was terribly hungry by now.

The bottle was actually hot, stuffed there in my poke along with my old canvas coat and my other bottle. I took a drink and my head swam around in the mid-day heat. I crawled on all fours back to the break in the fence and peeked down the street. It was still empty.

So I took up my poke and started up the street to another little place where they had good, cheap food. Fifteen cents for eggs, toast and coffee. Oh, how I needed that coffee!

But they were there, too. Three of them this time. And after I had walked in, I was afraid to turn around and run. Because they'd know for sure. So I just walked up to the counter and asked for a drink of water, nodding to them as I passed. They nodded back without saying anything.

I almost puked when I drank the water, with its sulphur taste. Especially since the place smelled of hot coffee and bacon and I was so hungry. I staggered as I turned around to go out. That man behind the counter knew I was hungry. But then he probably knew that they were hungry, too. And, God knows, he couldn't feed me without feeding them.

So I went out again into the sunshine. My stomach wasn't even rumbling anymore. And suddenly I wasn't even hungry. Just tired and sick. But I knew what that meant. I needed food. Even they had eaten since I had. And I had the whiskey to make me hungrier.

No one followed me, so I went down a little side alley thinking maybe I could get some scraps that a housewife had just thrown out. I didn't like the idea, but maybe I could even beg. I knew I could get

something to eat that way. But then, again, maybe she would want me to work first, and I was too weak by now. Besides, that didn't make sense when I had over four dollars in my pocket.

I didn't see anything except some coffee grains and potato peelings in a sack. I didn't feel hungry enough to try the peelings, even though that morning I would have. They wouldn't be good for me, I thought.

Maybe I could try a restaurant downtown. They wouldn't be downtown, where things were decent and expensive. But I had four bucks, so why shouldn't I go downtown and spend maybe forty or fifty cents on a really good dinner? They weren't following me — that I was sure of.

I walked into the Serenade Restaurant, and all the help looked at me as if they knew I must be going to ask for a hand-out. But I ignored them and walked up to a stool at the counter and sat down. My heart was beating wildly and my head was throbbing with the heat.

"What do you want?" the waitress asked.

But as I started to answer I saw one of them looking at me through the window. He didn't appear mad or anything, but he was curious and he was simply staring at me. Then another one appeared.

"Gimme a drink of water, will you lady?" I asked, calling her "lady" even if she was a snotty little teen-age bitch. I could have torn her head off, the way she smirked at me. Maybe it was the smell of coffee and food around me, or the clink of silverware on china.

"He wants a drink of water's all, George," she said in a loud voice to a man that stood by the cash register. He shrugged his shoulders and nodded his head. A couple of people looked at me. But I was too sick at my stomach to care, and I left my glass of water standing there.

"Well, how do you like that!" I heard the girl say as I walked away. And I heard another voice say, "Drunk."

They were all gone when I walked outside, so I just started up the street. I knew of a pool hall where they had pretty good hamburgs and beer. Maybe they weren't there.

But maybe, after all, I should give up. Give them the money and the whiskey. Then they wouldn't bother me anymore. And they'd probably give me something to eat; after all I was one of them in a way. But that would be letting Harold down. Besides, I didn't like giving in to them. Harold sure knew what he was getting himself out of when he gave me the whiskey and the money.

But they were in the poolroom, too. I should have expected that.

I went up to the counter and asked for a drink of water. They knew that I was drinking a lot of water today. It didn't make any difference if they weren't the same ones. At each place they were different, but they all were together and they all knew everything. They were just waiting for me to give in. They were all curious, as individuals, to know how long I could last.

I couldn't think right, by now. It was late afternoon, and walking around in all that heat had hurt me. For a wild second I thought about getting the two aside who were here in the poolroom with me and trying to get them to divvy up with me. But that just shows how fouled up I was getting. They'd never betray the others, because they knew. They'd stick together because apart and singly they didn't mean anything. That was the way they had me now. They forced me into being afraid and ashamed of being a single, human being. But I thought, and always have thought, that to be that is only to be real and fine and dignified. That's why I could never be one of them.

So what would be the use of approaching them and asking them to break off from the others and have some eats and drinks with me? They couldn't understand the justice of that from their vantage point of blind loyalty. Of course, the greatest justice would have been for them to have left me alone altogether.

I thought all of these things as I was sipping at my water. There was a man standing next to me who was eating a hamburger. I could see the red juice from the meat staining the fluffy white of the roll. I felt their eyes on me, so why not do it? Maybe it would make them believe that I didn't have any money, and that I was really desperate from hunger. The last part was getting to be true.

So I said, "Hello, Friend," to him.

He glanced at me with a hostile look in his eyes, and nodded.

He laid the sandwich down to take a drink from his beer.

"You don't mind if I have a bite, do you?" I said, as I reached over and picked up the sandwich. I had a bite out of it before he knew what I was doing. I was chewing frantically, with my mouth open, and I couldn't see anything. Maybe just the yellow from the lights. I heard the crack of a cue ball hitting on the split.

From far away there was someone pounding on me, trying to get inside, but my doors wouldn't open; I was alone way down inside of myself.

But I wasn't completely out. I felt my head being hurled violently against things which must have been hard and which would have

hurt if there had been more of me around to feel it. I felt part of the sandwich go dribbling out of my mouth, along with two or three teeth and what felt like, altogether, a half pint of blood. I choked for a while on that, but I was still feeling a pleasant kind of relief from everything.

Until the cold of night settled into my head and it was aching and throbbing so violently that I thought I wanted to die right then. And I was even more sick at my stomach. I was lying next to a pile of boxes beside the poolroom and I could see light in the window which was high up in the outside wall.

But a man has to keep on living as long as he can. It's part of the bargain we made when we were born, even if we have forgotten most of the terms. And our part of the bargain is all wrapped up in us so that we don't even know that it's a law from outside.

So, I got up and picked up my poke. I didn't think a man could hurt in so many places and still be alive to feel it. One of the bottles was gone and the other was broken in the poke. Naturally, my money was all gone. I know that he didn't get it; I mean the guy whose sandwich I took and who must have been the one — or the first one, anyway — to hit me. It was they who got it. I knew that.

But in my shoe I had a dime. I had saved it. Even Harold hadn't known about it. It was my very own. Of course, I couldn't have spent it when they were watching, because it would have shown them what they knew already . . . that I had money. But now they had gotten me. They wouldn't be around. They were probably right now on their way to Hamilton.

ALBERT COOK:

Metaphysical Poetry and "Measure for Measure"

Shakespeare as a child of his time followed Renaissance practices not only in choice of theme and expression of idea, not only in his omnipresent rhetoric, but also in the structure of two plays. These are the "problem" plays, *Troilus and Cressida* and *Measure for Measure,* where the logico-rhetorical or metaphysical method is pre-eminent, as it is with Shakespeare only in some sonnets. It is not surprising that Shakespeare's poetic drama would at times tend to resemble in structure the poetry of Donne, whose major poetic activity was contemporaneous with his own.

Empson in his essay on the double plot demonstrates how the private theme of love interrelates with the public theme of war in the plot, language, and character of *Troilus and Cressida.* Empson's unusual critical talent consists simply in discovering the metaphysical element of any literary work, and it can be said that his discussion of *Troilus and Cressida* clarifies its "problem" nature and solves its problem.

Measure for Measure similarly in (complex, single) plot, language, and character, works with the logical interrelations of government, religion, sex, and death, subjects often combined speculatively in metaphysical poems:

The problem of sex is central. But the plot relates it at once to Catholic dogma, civil law, and death: fornication is a sin and in Shakespeare's Vienna a capital offense. The plot's interaction is initiated by Claudio's condemnation for getting his fiancée Julietta with child. His sister Isabella pleads for his pardon with the substitute duke Angelo who has condemned him, unwittingly tempting the seemingly virtuous puritan to trade a pardon for her virginity. It is arranged (by the real Duke disguised as a priest) for Angelo's rejected, though contracted, fiancée to substitute in this bargain under disguise of darkness. The disguises are successively revealed and appropriately judged by the real Duke in the last act. Measure is meted for measure.

The Duke unites in his person the themes of the play: he is the head of the government disguised as a priest and in the end marries

the chaste Isabella. He is an idealized ruler who, like Prospero, initiates all the action in the play, so generalized that no name is given him in the text (though he appears as Vincentio in the list of characters). Under guise of a foreign mission he entrusts the rule to Angelo and remains in Vienna as a disguised priest. His expressed reasons for this action are pride in his own virtue, and finally in his commercial-governmental ambitions. L. C. Knights in *Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson* points out that the relation described by Weber and Tawney between Protestantism and Capitalism is exemplified both in the commercial careers of the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras and in their drama. Angelo is such a character. Like no one else in the play he is curiously both unaristocratic and unplebeian in temperament: a bourgeois. He is the hardest worker in the cabinet. He talks continually in metaphors of the counting house. He originally refused to carry out his marriage contract with Marianna because her dowry went down with a foundering ship. His puritan zeal and pride that refuses to take things as they come is brought to a head in the central sexual problem: he condemns Claudio to die where the Catholic Duke would simply ask him to marry at once, confess, and atone. Yet he will pardon Claudio in return for the mortal sin of Isabella's sacrificed virginity, and he finally orders Claudio's execution for fear of retaliation from the freed brother of the dishonored girl. His own rigorous conscience demands the death penalty for himself when his two crimes are revealed in the last act. The wise Duke realizes, as many critics of Shakespeare have failed to do, that Angelo's repentance is a true one and that he can finally be trusted to serve the state and remain a faithful husband to Marianna. After all, the crimes did not come off: compulsory intercourse turned out to be fulfillment of a marriage contract, and judicial murder, the execution of a bona fide criminal. The crimes (sins) were perpetrated in the first place because with delegated power the inner contradictions in his motives became quickly objectified. If his intent was black, his repentance is commensurately strong.

At the end of the play the Duke's government is all-powerful but merciful, religious dogma is satisfied, death has been avoided, and sexual rampancy has been regularized to everyone's satisfaction with multiple marriages realized and prostitution forbidden — all through the plot's logical interworkings. The logical counterpoint and counterbalance of the plot is described in the title as well, and

reflected in the almost allegorical destiny of the characters; this has led M. C. Bradbrook to relate *Measure for Measure* to the Morality tradition.

Government, sex, religion, and death interrelate in the language as well as in plot and character. Shakespeare, following the tradition of Jonson and others, has given many of his characters significant names: Pompey, surreptitious emperer of bawdry, whom Lucio contrasts with the lawful "Caesar" of Vienna as the pimp is being haled off to prison; Master Froth, the light-headed idler about town; Elbow, the shoving constable; and not least Angelo, who calls himself a saint and an angel and is reputed to have superhuman virtue (an "angel" is an Elizabethan coin, and puns on the two meanings of the word occur often in the plays of the period). The ambiguity of Angelo's character is just such a pun: he is a seeming angel actually motivated by commercial interest.

The puns of the comic relief characters reveal the interplay among and the debasement of government, sex, religion, and death. Pompey tells Mistress Overdone that she need not fear for customers when Vienna's whorehouses are razed: "Good counsellors lack no clients." If law forbids sex, sex is itself like law. Elbow, whose self-extension of his constable's term expresses supposedly his civic responsibility but actually his obscene pride and curiosity in being an official superego, reveals this in his malapropisms (the Renaissance vice *cacozelia*):

> Elbow. First, an it like you, the house is a respected house; next, this is a respected fellow; and his mistress is a respected woman.
> Pompey. By this hand, sir, his wife is a more respected person than any of us all.
> Elbow. Varlet, thou liest; thou liest, wicked varlet: the time is yet to come that she was ever respected with man, woman, or child.
> Pompey. Sir, she was respected with him, before he married with her.
> Escalus. Which is the wiser here? Justice or Iniquity? Is this true?
> Elbow. O thou caitiff! O thou varlet! O thou wicked Hannibal! I respected with her, before I was married to her! If ever I was respected with her, or she with me, let not your worship think me the poor Duke's officer. Prove this, thou wicked Hannibal, or I'll have mine action of battery on thee.
> Escalus. If he took you a box o' th' ear, you might have your action of slander too.

Actually the "respect" of Elbow, and of his wife, is really an obscene

public thing, a debasement of true civic virtue. So Pompey, the destructive "Hannibal," is both that and the "cannibal" that unwittingly punning Elbow had really meant to say. A pimp destroys and devours his customers. And "slander" is really "battery" against Elbow's constantly assaulted reputation.

Elbow's hypocritical self-righteousness is shown by his statement, identical with hypocritical "prenzie" Angelo's implicit claim, that he and his wife are too "respectable" to have ever — before or after marriage! — indulged in sexual intercourse. His wife, as he says before, is "an honest woman" whom he "detests before heaven and your honour. . . ." He "detests" her bad reputation, as he "respects" her, which he had meant to say; and he employs "respects" later in a further malapropism which doubles back on her sexual reputation. His consistent failure to express his desired meaning lays bare the contradictions in the true meaning of his actions, as when he calls Pompey a "benefactor," meaning to say "malefactor." For though Pompey the bawd is a malefactor to the state, he is a benefactor to Elbow in that his existence as a patent bawd allows Elbow continually to indulge the orgy of righteous indignation which is his chief joy in life. That a "malefactor" to the state could actually be a "benefactor" to its constable suggests something rotten in the constable's purpose. Actually he harbors in his mind as in his speech an illicit commerce between religion, sex, and government: all are reduced to smutty respectability in a false logic which is superseded and deprived of its nourishment by the triumph of the Duke's true logic toward the end of the play. Pompey is put in jail and Mistress Overdone ("nine husbands sir, Overdone by the last") is left without livelihood as the condemnation on "houses of resort" is allowed to stand. In Act Four Pompey is significantly apprenticed to a hangman. He finds that many of his best customers are in jail for one crime or another, and in discussing the "mystery" (in a religious sense) of the hangman's trade with the Hangman Abhorson (abortion, abhor, whoreson), he puns on cutting off a man's head in the double sense of execution and sexual satisfaction (equivalent to the metaphysical pun "die").

In the rhetorical texture of the language, as in the puns, metaphysical logic is dominant. When Angelo attempts to induce Isabella to "sell" her virginity (II,4) he speaks of religious matters solely in financial metaphors. Sister Miriam Joseph shows that the most famous speech in the play, the Duke's long discourse on life and death to the

condemned Claudio, breaks down strictly into the three terms of an Aristotelian syllogism. Isabella argues as a keen logician with Angelo. The Duke's speech at the beginning of the play is characteristic of its exclusively rhetorical temper:

> Duke. Of government the properties to unfold
> Would seem in me t'affect speech and discourse,
> Since I am put to know that your own science
> Exceeds, in that, the lists of all advice
> My strength can give you: then no more remains
> But that to your sufficiency, as your worth is able,
> And let them work. The nature of our people,
> Our city's institutions, and the terms
> For common justice, y'are as pregnant in
> As art and practice hath enriched any
> That we remember. There is our commission,
> From which we would not have you warp. Call hither,
> I say, bid come before us Angelo.
> What figure of us think you he will bear?
> For you must know we have with special soul
> Elected him our absence to supply. . . .

Even the predominant images are taken from rhetoric. This for Shakespeare is curiously bare of "modern" tropes, like all the language in the play except the prose of the comic relief characters, and even they speak, on occasion, in metaphysical puns.

In both *Troilus and Cressida* and *Measure for Measure* structure and texture are nearer the rhetorico-logical tradition of the Renaissance than in any other play of Shakespeare. Both are deficient in the immediately interrelating images which are characteristic of modern works and of which other plays afford us supreme examples: *Antony and Cleopatra, Lear, The Tempest, Hamlet.* Both have a curiously ironic tone, like the logic of metaphysical poems. In fact, logic and comedy, of which irony is one attitude, are different aspects of the same philosophical-aesthetic outlook. The most striking example of this is the total work (mathematical and comic) of Lewis Carroll.[1]

Only the problem plays display dominantly the rhetorico-logical technique. The recent vogue, following long obscurity, of the metaphysical poets is paralleled in the problem plays, whose structural and ideological difficulties have repelled all but modern critics. Johnson,

[1] An elaboration of this idea is presented in my book on comedy, *The Dark Voyage and the Golden Mean.*

Coleridge, Swinburne, and many others have found fault with *Measure for Measure.* Modern men of letters as different temperamentally as Eliot and E. A. Robinson have accorded it high admiration, and it has begun to attract the close critical attention it deserves.

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